INVESTIGATING THE DYNAMICS OF ATHLETE SATISFACTION IN RELATION TO DIFFERENT PERFORMANCE LEVELS

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Abstract

Self-satisfaction is a process of effecting satisfying adaptation to one's environment and thereby facilitating a self-satisfied person to act wisely in his surroundings. Since an athlete's involvement is central to all athletic programs and endeavors, his satisfaction has both theoretical and practical implications relating to his performance outcomes. The present investigation was, therefore, undertaken to explore the level of self-satisfaction among hockey players participating at international, national and state levels. Subjects selected for the present study (N=120) were administered the Athlete Satisfaction Questionnaire (Riemer and Chelladurai, 2000). Analysis of variance (3x2 factorial design) was used to compare the three performance levels and gender groups. Mean and SD values were calculated and post-hoc test was also applied to find out the direction of differences among these groups. The results revealed that the international players had significantly higher level of self-satisfaction as compared to the state and national players with regard to all the studied facets of athlete satisfaction. Even the national players have exhibited significantly better self-satisfaction than state players on the indices Ability Utilization, Budget, Medical Personnel, Academic Support and External Agents. Gender differences were noticed only on Team Performance indice. These results suggest that the players at lower rank were not as satisfied with the available facilities and the sporting environment as were the players participating at higher level. If the talent is to be nurtured the grass root level players have to be looked after equally well and given due attention by providing requisite facilities and opportunities conducive to their growth.

Keywords: athlete satisfaction, performance,sport, dynamics, self-satisfied

1. INTRODUCTION:

In sporting arena, since an athlete is the focal point, it is pertinent to evaluate his or her reaction to his/her own experiences. The training and competition satisfaction has great significance for an athlete's own representation and psychological health. Understanding the level of self satisfaction within an athlete is a foremost requisite for any positive and successful sports encounter. Chelladurai and Riemer (1998) emphasized that an athlete's satisfaction is vital for three reasons. First, an athlete's satisfaction with his or her sport should naturally be linked to his or her performance in that sport. An athlete who is more satisfied will exert more effort and will be able to endure the rigors of the competition. Secondly, an athlete's satisfaction can be seen as a precursor or an outcome in the conceptual frameworks of other constructs, such as cohesion. The third reason, which is central to the rationale behind this study, is that an athlete's self-satisfaction is a key concern in any athletic program. Chelladurai and Riemer (1997) defined athlete satisfaction as a positive affective state that arises when an athlete evaluates the structures, processes, and outcomes that are related to his athletic experience. An athlete's level of satisfaction can be seen as a reflection of how well the athletic endeavor meets his own personal standards. Even effective intra-team communication has been reported to have direct correlation with athlete satisfaction (Sullivan and Gee, 2007). Coaches, who usually spend many hours with the athletes, must have the capacity to interact with their athletes and demonstrate a certain level of leadership in order to create an interconnected team and to guide the team to realize the best outcomes for the individual athlete and the team (Jowett & Lavallee, 2007). A study on Malaysian university's basketball team indicated that team integration was the most important factor influencing athlete satisfaction and that the external agents, most obvious of which are media and university/local community, was the lowest rated factor of athlete satisfaction (Nazarudin et al**.** 2009). Trendafilova et al (2010) found that international student-athletes participating in NCAA Division I-Football Bowl Subdivision athletics were satisfied with the dimensions measuring satisfaction, including academic support services, personal treatment and medical support. In addition, male athletes were more satisfied with external agents (i.e., media, the local and university community) than female athletes. Providing the best possible environment to achieve a high level of satisfaction will ultimately lead to a better performance on and off the field (Zhang, DeMichele & Connaughton, 2004). As the players gain more experience in practicing sports, the more experiences they accumulate for defining the most important obstacles in promoting sports (Hatamleh, et al

2013). Gilson et al (2013) suggest that open and honest lines of communication need to be formed early with athletes by various athletic personnel so that individuals have the support system necessary to prevent maladaptive results. Barnhill and Turner (2013) reveal that increased perceptions of psychological contract breach significantly lower student-athletes' cognitive trust in their coaches and significantly increases their intentions to leave their team. Athletic experience needs to be enjoyable, satisfying and instrumental to further the development of athletes and their performance enhancement. This underlying objective prompted the researchers to undertake the present study.

2. METHOD & PROCEDURE

For the present study, Indian hockey players (N=120) who had participated at International (N=40), National (N=40) and at State (N=40) competition levels were administered Athlete Satisfaction Questionnaire (Riemer & Chelladurai, 2000) to assess their levels of satisfaction with regard to the sporting environment, resources and facilities available to them. The ASQ comprised 56 questions incorporating different facets of athlete satisfaction presented on a 7-point Likert scale. For the purposes of this study 10 facets of athlete satisfaction i.e. Individual Performance, Team Performance, Ability Utilization, Strategy, Personal Treatment, Training and Instruction, Budget, Medical Personnel, Academic Support Services, and External Agents were utilized. Overall differences on self-satisfaction were also worked out. Correlations between the ASQ's subscales and scales of commitment and negative affectivity provided evidence of criterion-related validity. Reliability estimates (Cronbach's alpha) ranged from .78 to .95. High scores reflect greater self satisfaction among the athletes. For the collection of the data, required formalities were completed and prior permission of the concerned coaches and team managers, and consent of the participants were obtained before administering ASQ. Analysis of variance (3x2 factorial design) was used to compare the three performance levels and the two gender groups. Mean and SD values were calculated, and post-hoc test was also applied to find out the direction of differences among the performance and the gender groups.

3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The results relating to the analysis of variance, descriptive values and the mean differences on Individual Performance, Team Performance and Ability Utilization have been presented in Tables 1, 1(a) and 1(b) respectively.

Table 1: 3x2 ANOVA Results with regard to the Performance and the Gender Groups on the facets Individual Performance, Team Performance and Ability Utilization

Variable	Source of Variance	Ss	df	Ms	F-Value
Individual Performance	3 Performance Group	75.517	2	378.758	43.968**
	2 Gender Groups	35.208	1	35.208	4.087
	Performance x Gender	89.017	2	44.508	5.167*
	Within	982.050	114	8.614	
Team Performance	3 Performance Group	780.317	2	390.158	30.453**
	2 Gender Groups	66.008	1	66.008	5.152*
	Performance x Gender	33.717	2	16.858	1.316
	Within	1460.550	114	12.812	
Ability Utilization	3 Performance Group	2163.467	2	1081.733	60.754**
	2 Gender Groups	4.800	1	4.800	.270
	Performance x Gender	295.400	2	147.700	8.295**
	Within	2029.800	114	17.805	

Table-1 (a): Descriptive values with regard to the Performance and the Gender Groups on the facets Individual Performance, Team Performance and Ability Utilization

Variable	Group	State	National	Inter-National	Male	Female
Individual Performance	Mean	13.80	12.70	18.33	14.25	15.33
	SD	3.27	4.10	1.99	2.85	2.76
Team Performance	Mean	13.45	13.25	17.93	15.13	13.65
	SD	5.70	3.66	2.34	3.33	3.71
Ability Utilization	Mean	20.25	22.50	29.70	23.73	24.13
	SD	4.99	5.15	4.08	3.94	4.19

Table 1 (b): Results of Post hoc test with regard to the performance and gender groups on the facets Individual Performance, Team Performance and Ability Utilization

Variable	Between Group	Mean Difference	Std. Error
Individual Performance	State & National	1.10	.656
	State & International	-4.53**	.656
	National & International	-5.63**	.656
	Male & Female	-1.08	.656
Team Performance	State & National	0.20	.800
	State & International	-4.48**	.800
	National & International	-4.68**	.800
	Male & Female	1.48*	.800
Ability Utilization	State & National	-2.25*	.944
	State & International	-9.45**	.944
	National & International	-7.20**	.944
	Male & Female	-0.40	.944

The results in Table-1 revealed that there were significant differences among the three performance level groups on *Individual Performance* ($F = 43.968$, $p<0.01$). The mean scores in Table-1 (a) and mean differences in Table-1 (b) have indicated that the international group was experiencing significantly higher level of self-satisfaction regarding their individual performance as compared to the other two groups. Singh and Surujlal (2006) have also identified individual performance as important indicators of athlete satisfaction. International group

was also found to be significantly more satisfied with regard to their *Team Performance* (F=30.453, p<0.01) as compared to the National and State level groups. This was perhaps due to the fact that being recognized as international players, they were getting much better facilities and better training environment than the other two performance groups. This factor helped them to give out their best performance. With regard to the component *Ability Utilization,* the three groups also differed significantly from each other (F=60.754, p<0.01, Table-1) and both the National and International groups demonstrated significantly better satisfaction relating to their ability utilization as compared to the State group (Tables-1a & 1b). Even as compared to National group, the International group had expressed their satisfaction at significant level on this facet.

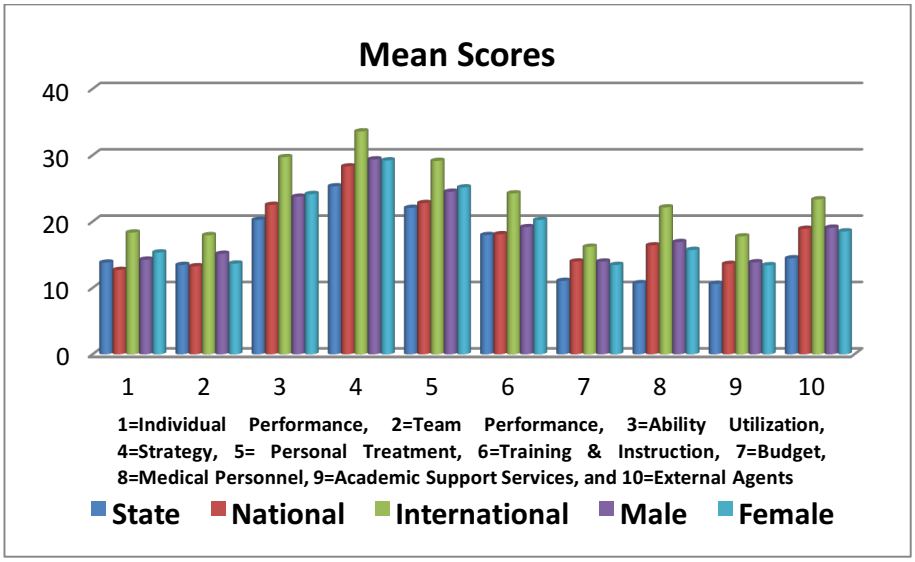

Figure-1: Mean Scores of three performance groups and two gender groups on all the Components of Athlete Satisfaction

Table 2: 3x2 ANOVA Results with regard to the Performance Groups and the Gender Groups on the facets Strategy, Personal Treatment, and Training & Instruction

Variable	Source of Variance	Ss	df	Ms	F-Value
Strategy	3 Performance Group	1213.217	2	606.608	18.553**
	2 Gender Groups	.833	1	.833	.025
	Performance x Gender	283.017	2	141.508	4.328*
	Within	3727.300	114	32.696	
Personal Treatment	3 Performance Group	1119.267	2	559.633	28.841**
	2 Gender Groups	12.675	1	12.675	.653
	Performance x Gender	62.600	2	31.300	1.613
	Within	2212.050	114	19.404	
Training and Instruction	3 Performance Group	653.867	2	326.933	35.166**
	2 Gender Groups	14.008	1	14.008	1.507
	Performance x Gender	13.867	2	6.933	.746

	Within	1059.850	114	9.297	
Budget	3 Performance Group	545.067	2	272.533	31.142**
	2 Gender Groups	8.008	1	8.008	.915
	Performance x Gender	78.067	2	39.033	4.460*
	Within	997.650	114	8.751	

Table-2 (a): Descriptive values with regard to the Performance and the Gender Groups on the facets Strategy, Personal Treatment, and Training & Instruction

Variable	Group	State	National	Inter-National	Male	Female
Strategy	Mean	25.30	28.30	33.57	29.36	29.20
	SD	6.98	6.16	6.29	4.66	5.97
Personal Treatment	Mean	22.05	22.78	29.13	24.48	25.13
	SD	5.09	4.68	3.76	4.12	4.59
Training and Instruction	Mean	15.10	13.18	18.78	15.30	15.98
	SD	3.18	3.95	1.98	2.66	3.15
Budget	Mean	11.05	13.97	16.18	13.96	13.45
	SD	3.39	3.21	3.06	2.54	3.14

Table 2 (b): Results of Post hoc test with regard to the performance and the gender groups on the facets Strategy, Personal Treatment, and Training & Instruction

Variable	Between Group	Mean Difference	Std. Error
Strategy	State & National	-3.00	1.279
	State & International	-8.27**	1.279
	National & International	-5.27**	1.279
	Male & Female	0.16	1.279
Personal Treatment	State & National	-.73	.985
	State & International	-7.08**	.985
	National & International	-6.35**	.985
	Male & Female	-0.65	.985

Training and Instruction	State & National	1.92	.682
	State & International	-3.68**	.682
	National & International	-5.60**	.682
	Male & Female	-0.68	.682
Budget	State & National	-2.92**	.661
	State & International	-5.13**	.661
	National & International	-2.21**	.661
	Male & Female	0.51	.661

Regarding the component *Strategy*, the differences between the three sports groups have been found to be significant (F=18.553, p<0.01). The mean difference between State and International groups was -8.27 and between National and International groups it was –5.27. Both these differences were found to be significant (Tables-2 and 2b). These results demonstrated that the International group was having significantly better satisfaction with regard to strategy being employed by the team and team management, as compared to the State and National level performance groups. On the component *Personal Treatment*, the International players were found to be significantly more satisfied with the way they were personally treated by the management and training officials as compared to the State and National level hockey players (F=28.841). This was perhaps due to the fact that they being elite players and representing the nation, were afforded much better personal respect. Singh and Surujlal (2006) view personal treatment by the coach as an important contributor to athlete satisfaction. Trendafilova et al (2010) have also found the international students athletes to be more satisfied about the personal treatment given to them, Similarly, with regard to the *Training and Instruction* component, the International players were significantly more satisfied with their training facilities and instructions being imparted to them (F=35.166, Table 2). With regard to the *Budget* allocation and utilization by the sports administrators, International level players were found to be significantly more satisfied with the financial matters than the other two performance groups (F=31.142, p<0.01). Financial constrains do influence the efficacious implementation of sports programs and usually it is the players participating at the lower levels who are adversely affected the most. Hatamleh, et al (2013) also identified financial domain to be one of the most important obstacles in the way of promoting sports movement in the clubs of Zarqa Governorate.

Table 3: 3x2 ANOVA Results with regard to the Performance and the Gender Groups on the facets Medical Personnel, Academic Support Services, External Agents and Overall Self-Satisfaction

Variable	**Source of Variance**	Ss	**df**	**Ms**	**F-Value**
Medical Personnel	3 Performance Group	2750.017	2	1375.008	78.594**
	2 Gender Groups	42.008	1	42.008	2.401
	Performance x Gender	83.117	2	41.558	2.375
	Within	1994.450	114	17.495	
Academic Support Services	3 Performance Group	1336.717	2	668.358	99.022**
	2 Gender Groups	5.208	1	5.208	.772
	Performance x Gender	56.217	2	28.108	4.164*
	Within	769.450	114	6.750	
External	3 Performance Group	1693.617	2	846.808	79.037**

Agents	2 Gender Groups	9.633	1	9.633	.899
	Performance x Gender	13.717	2	6.858	.640
	Within	1221.400	114	10.714	
Overall Self-Satisfaction	3 Performance Group	232225.4	2	116112.7	122.088**
	2 Gender Groups	300.833	1	300.833	.316
	Performance x Gender	13461.817	2	6730.908	7.077**
	Within	108420.6	114	951.058	

Table-3 (a): Descriptive values with regard to the Performance and the Gender Groups on the facets Medical Personnel, Academic Support Services, External Agents and Overall Self-Satisfaction

Variable	**Group**	**State**	**National**	**Inter-National**	**Male**	**Female**
Medical Personnel	Mean	10.70	16.40	22.12	16.90	15.71
	SD	4.22	4.79	3.61	3.28	4.71
Academic Support Services	Mean	10.60	13.60	17.75	13.85	13.40
	SD	3.35	2.54	2.25	2.43	2.61
External Agents	Mean	14.45	18.90	23.33	19.06	18.50
	SD	3.38	3.81	2.80	2.56	3.65
Overall Self-Satisfaction	Mean	232.60	252.12	330.75	268.58	271.75
	SD	28.80	44.65	25.44	19.87	33.42

Table 3 (b): Results of Post hoc test with regard to three performance groups & two gender groups on the facets Medical Personnel, Academic Support Services, External Agents and Overall Self-Satisfaction

Variable	Between Group	Mean Difference	Std. Error
Medical Personnel	State & National	-5.70**	.935
	State & International	-11.42**	.935
	National & International	-5.72**	.935
	Male & Female	1.19	.935
Academic Support Services	State & National	-3.00**	.581
	State & International	-7.15**	.581

	National & International	-4.15**	.581
	Male & Female	0.45	.581
External Agents	State & National	-4.51**	.732
	State & International	-8.94**	.732
	National & International	-4.43**	.732
	Male & Female	0.56	.732
Overall Self-Satisfaction	State & National	-19.52**	6.896
	State & International	-98.15**	6.896
	National & International	-22.68**	6.896
	Male & Female	-78.63**	6.896

On the issues relating to *Medical Personnel*, i.e. the availability of medical professionals as and when needed, and their interaction with the players, the International level players were found to be significantly more satisfied as compared to the other two groups ($F=78.594$, $p<0.01$, Table 3). The National group was also found to be significantly more satisfied than the State level group. Concerning the *Academic Support Services* available to the players, International and National level players were more satisfied with the services being made available to them as compare to the State level players. Among the International and National groups, the former was significantly more satisfied than the later group ($F=99.022$, $p<0.01$). In a study conducted by Trendafilova et al (2010) international student athletes had expressed their satisfaction with regard to medical services and academic support services being made available to them. Similar differences have been found with regard to the component *External Agents* and the State level group was found to be least satisfied among the three studied groups ($F=79.037$). Concerning *Overall Self- Satisfaction* among the three performance groups, the International level players were found to be significantly more satisfied with the sporting environment made available to them as compared to the other two groups, and the State level group was found to be least satisfied ($F=122.088$, $p<0.01$).

So far as gender differences are concerned, male players were found to be significantly more satisfied with the facilities being made available to them as compared to the female players only on the component i.e. *Team Performance* whereas female players had exhibited significantly better *Overall Self-Satisfaction*, i.e. the female players were found to be significantly more satisfied with the sporting environment and facilities available to them as compared to their male counterparts.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The issue of providing productive sporting environment is directly related with the quality and quantity of the facilities, resources and support services that are available to the sportspersons. It has been found in the present study that the International players were significantly more satisfied with the facilities and support services made available to them on all the facets of athlete satisfaction as compared to the players of National and State levels. In fact, the State level players have been found to have expressed lowest degree of self satisfaction with regard to the facilities and amenities being made available to them. When we embark on the task of hunting talent, it has to begin at grass root level. These players will be able to give out their best only when provided developmentally appropriate facilities, as well as the help of support service. It has been found that with regard to the component Budget, the State level players have expressed lowest level of satisfaction. Subhi (2005) too had noticed that the absence of financial resources do impede the development of sports. Administrative domain is the base for leading all the matters concerning sports development, particularly if the administration has a broad vision about the development of sports (Hatamleh, et al 2013). Thus, the availability of facilities, resources and sporting environment to the players at State and National levels need serious consideration.

Among all those who involved in the process of selection, training and competition, coaches are assumed to be more actively involved with the process (Reinboth & Duda, 2006). They spend many hours interacting with athletes, and are assumed to play critical roles in shaping the quality of the athletes' sport experience (Gagne´ et al., 2003). It is, thus, important to examine the psychological training environment/climate they create over the course of the season (Ames, 1992), and how that environment relates to the well-being of the athletes. To maximize the satisfaction of athletes' basic needs and fulfillment, which in turn are expected to foster a feeling of self satisfaction among athletes, findings of the present research tentatively suggest that the training programs need to be restructured to provide the most conducive sporting environment to the athletes. Unruh et al (2005) noticed that the athletes in high-profile sports demonstrated a higher level of satisfaction than did athletes in low-profile sports. For deeper insight, the future research needs to be focused on more sport specific satisfaction differences among the participants.

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