

A comparative study of psychological wellbeing states of sportspersons and non-sportspersons

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Abstract: *The lives of sportspersons are different from those of people not involved in sports. The purpose of the study was to determine the difference in psychological wellbeing of sportspersons and non-sportspersons of same age group (18-25) where, the sportspersons were from T.T. Nagar Stadium Bhopal and non-sportspersons were students from BSSS Bhopal (n=50). The Ryff scale of psychological wellbeing was used here which assesses psychological wellbeing based on six factors, namely, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance. The data was analyzed by comparing the means. It was revealed in the findings of the study that sportspersons have higher psychological wellbeing states overall and when compared in terms of factors individually, it was established that sportspersons enjoyed better states of autonomy, personal growth, purpose in life and self-acceptance; non sportspersons aced in environmental mastery and positive relations with others. However the differences between the scores so found for sportspersons and non-sportspersons is not very large, as the following age group of individuals are dependent on their significant others for their needs.*

Key Words: *Psychological wellbeing, stress, autonomy, self-acceptance.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Psychological wellbeing is a very vital aspect of leading a healthy life. The life of sportspersons is different from those not involved in sports activities. And so is the aim of this research to find out if there is any difference in the psychological wellbeing caused by involvement of people in these sports activities. Also, there are certain factors which the Ryff scale encompasses and checks the correlates of psychological wellbeing.

Psychological wellbeing has two important facets. The first of these refers to the extent to which people experience positive emotions and feelings of happiness. Sometimes this aspect of psychological wellbeing is referred to as subjective wellbeing (Deiner, 2000). There is always some meaning in life that we keep searching in life, in all that we do and on the other hand are the positive feelings we get by doing something we enjoy, both of these things comprise the psychological wellbeing.

Stressful experiences can predispose people to subsequent mood and anxiety disorders (Gladstone, Parker and Mitchell, 2004) and also, psychological wellbeing can be maintained and even increased as the ability to bounce back is developed when an individual faces crisis situations in their lives. Also, children exposed to moderately stressful events seem better able to cope with subsequent stressors (Khobasa and Maddi, 1999) and in a similar finding, which dealt with working adults, stated that similarly positive was the effect of such stressors.

Majorly, psychological wellbeing can be understood with its 3 spheres- hedonic wellbeing (feeling of pleasure, happiness etc), eudemonic wellbeing (sense of seeking meaning in life and having a purpose in life) and evaluative wellbeing (feeling of satisfaction from one's life). Many recent studies have established that physical health affects mental health and vice versa and so this relationship between the two is said to be bidirectional. It is also observed that, people of older ages were found to have mental illnesses such as depression and affected eudemonic and hedonic wellbeing and these elderly people were suffering from chronic health issues like heart diseases, arthritis etc. This indicates that there is a relationship between subjective wellbeing and physical health and these both affect each other. Autonomy is one of the factors affecting psychological wellbeing of an individual. A person is said to have autonomy if he or she can make decisions in their life individually and with free will. There should not be any such feeling of being wrong or guilt or shame internally and the external pressures too must be absent so as to safeguard one's autonomy. Another factor, according to this scale that affects a person's psychological wellbeing is environmental mastery. Environmental mastery is how well an individual can adjust to their surroundings and mix well with the people around them. It should not be mistaken to be a behavior; it has got to do with a person's state of mind. It is also a sense that one has that whether he or she can have an influence on the ongoing events in life.

Next factor is personal growth under this scale. Under this factor, the participants were assessed on how focused they are on improving themselves as a person and how willing they are to expand their horizons. And also how willing the participants are to accept changes in their lives.

Another factor is positive relations with others, explains how good relations have the person formed and maintained so far. Having good relations with others also indicates that the person does not have feelings of loneliness and there are healthy and mutual relationships in one's life.

The next factor is purpose in life. Here in, it explains the individual's purpose in life and how directed is he or she towards any goal in life. If a person is said to be purposeful in life, he or she tends to be a person who is goal directed and is aware of what he wants to accomplish in life.

Self-acceptance is the last factor in this scale. This trait in an individual is desirable as such an individual tends to be confident about himself or herself and is constantly striving to improve herself or himself. This also indicates that the individual has accepted himself as he is and thus moving towards having an integrated personality.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Involvement of individuals in activities like sports brings changes in their lives. Also, some cope with these transitions effectively while some fail in doing so and so maintenance of psychological wellbeing of oneself becomes a task. While on the other hand, students of this age experience life changes which might hamper their psychological wellbeing state when they find themselves unable to handle the stressors (Chao, 2012).

One's mental health has a major role to play when it comes to psychological wellbeing and thus is widely studied as is an issue of concern. A study done by Soheila Pandhi, Arida Suraya, Bt Md Yunus and Samsilah Bt Roslan (July, 2013), considering the correlates of psychological wellbeing amongst Graduate students in Malaysia, aimed to examine whether there are differences in psychological wellbeing among graduate students in terms of demographic profile (faculty, age, race, number of semester of study, gender, marital and employment status and family size). It was found here that there was a significant positive relationship among different semesters of study, ages, genders and marital status. Also, the results indicated that employment and marital status have a significant difference in autonomy and the marital status indicated significant and positive difference for positive relationships, purpose in life, self-acceptance and thus overall psychological wellbeing. Moreover, the results so found also highlighted that no significant difference lies in psychological wellbeing of graduate students belonging to various races and size of families.

A recent study by Melissa Ludban, which too focused on the psychological wellbeing of college students aimed at examining the psychological wellbeing of college students and the factors which have an impact on it. The Ryff scale of psychological wellbeing was applied here on 131 college students. According to the results so found, gender, age financial wellbeing and support were the factors that impacted psychological wellbeing of college students. Psychological wellbeing was found to increase among college students with more involvement in physical activities in leisure time. And so, leisure time physical activities were found to be the best to be encouraged in colleges and universities when it comes to wellbeing (Castillo, Molinia- Garcia and Queralt, 2011).

As per the results of many studies, it was established that positive social support leads to better management of stress by individuals (Chao, 2012). During college life too, there are many life transitions which the students deal with and which might be a cause of their high rising stress levels, and thus in this period of life too support plays a crucial role. The stress here might also be because of the transition in life from being a student to becoming a working professional (Bewick, Koutsopoulou, Miles, Slaa and Barkmam, 2010).

According to the findings of Ryff (1989), students pursuing their majors in their education tend to have better psychological wellbeing especially in factors like personal growth and purpose in life.

As found in another study by Bewick et al. (2010), students' wellbeing psychologically showed significant changes during their first year in university. In the results of the study it was found that the psychological wellbeing of students reduced significantly from the time before they had enrolled themselves to the semester one of their respective subjects and then their psychological wellbeing increased to some extent in next semester and furthermore, it decreased in year two's second semester comparatively to semester one of second year. The results were found to be forming similar patterns for males and females. In another similar study by Terenzini, Theophilides, and Lorang (1984), it was found that the overall personal development of university students remains steady during the year three.

In a study aiming to assess the psychological wellbeing and its contributing factors in people by Escriba-Aguir and Tenias-Burillo (2004) concluded that families where healthy marital relationships and equal chances to each member are given while taking decisions in the family; their level of psychological wellbeing are high. As per a Meta-analysis conducted by Pinquart and Sorensen (2001) where the samples comprised of both males and females, it was concluded that there lies no significant differences when it comes to psychological wellbeing states of both the genders. Interestingly, in another study by Ruini et al (2003), a significant difference was found to exist between the genders when it came to psychological wellbeing. Women of this study scored less in all the dimensions except for in positive relations with others.

3. METHODOLOGY:

A co relational research design was used in this study. The samples for the study were selected randomly from various colleges and stadiums. Firstly the selection of samples from the different facets was done, namely, Directorate

sports and youth welfare (T.T.Nagar Stadium Bhopal) and students practicing in BSSS College Bhopal. All the participants lied in the age group of 18-25. The students from college belonged to various streams and the sportspersons were from athletics, volleyball, khokho and basketball background.

The tool used for this study was Ryff’s (1989) psychological wellbeing scale. This scale is majorly utilized when it comes to assessment of psychological wellbeing of individuals. The scale comprises of 6 different components based on which the scores of individuals are analyzed independently, namely- autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life and self-acceptance. There are six alternative choices from which the respondent can choose as their answer, which are based on 7 point likert scale (strongly agree, somewhat agree, a little agree, neither agree nor disagree, a little disagree, somewhat disagree and strongly disagree). Each subscale constitutes 7 items, and hence there are in total 42 items in the scale.

- The autonomy subscale items are- 1,13,24,35,41,10,21
- Environmental mastery subscale items are- 3,15,26,36,42,12,23
- The personal growth subscale items are- 5, 17,28,37,2,14,25
- Positive relations with others subscale items are- 7, 18,30,38,4,16,27
- The purpose in life subscale items are- 9, 20,32,39,6,29,33
- The self acceptance subscale items are- 11, 22,34,40,8,19,31

A few questions are worded in reverse of what this test measures and so for scoring them different method is used. Question number 1,2,3,4,6,7,11,13,17,20,21,22,23,27,29,31,35,36,37,38 and 40 have to be scored reversely, and rest of the questions follow the simple rule of scoring as- 1,2,3,4,5,6,7.

Hypotheses-

- (a) The sportspersons will have comparatively higher levels of psychological wellbeing states than non-sportspersons.

Statistical tool applied here for studying the difference were the mean scores of both the respective categories, i.e. sportspersons and non-sportspersons in the 6 factors of this scale used, namely, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, self-acceptance.

4. RESULTS :

Table 1.1

S.no.	Factors	Sum total (X)	Sum total (Y)
1.	Autonomy	766	815
2.	Environmental mastery	745	727
3.	Personal growth	875	898
4.	Positive relations with others	864	861
5.	Purpose in life	853	897
6.	Self acceptance	819	839
	Overall	4933	5125

Difference in psychological wellbeing of sportspersons and non sportspersons across the factors (X: Non-sportspersons, Y: Sportspersons)

5. INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION:

The participating sportspersons (24 in number) of this study were from T.T. Nagar Stadium, Bhopal and sportspersons in BSSS College, Bhopal. The non-sportspersons (24) were students from BSSS College Bhopal. Results of the study were fetched by comparing the so found scores of the two categories of students (age group 18-25) based on the six factors in the Ryff scale, namely, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance.

In factor one, autonomy; the sportspersons score more than the non-sportspersons. This indicates that the sportspersons are better decision makers and their decisions are not influenced by the views of others. They have confidence in their opinions and have control over their lives. The non-sportspersons’ scores indicate that their level of autonomy is less than that of sportspersons and thus tend to have less confidence in their own views and opinions and fear putting them in front of strong opinionated people. They are dependent on other significant people in their lives to make important life decisions.

In factor, environmental mastery; the non-sportspersons score more than the sportspersons and the reasons which can be attached with this result can be the more amount of interaction that they have with the environment while the sportspersons have a different exposure than that of non-sportspersons. The non-sportspersons have more time as compared to sportspersons to master the environment they are in and hence become better at managing the many

responsibilities of their daily lives. The more time spent in understanding the environment leads to better adjustment and hence mastery of the environment and so non sportspersons tend to score higher.

In another factor, personal growth; the sportspersons ace in this factor as they are focused more on bettering themselves and have a goal set for themselves on which they are working. To excel in their respective sport is what they are focusing on at the present time and hence are continuously trying to improve themselves. As there are periodic tournaments and competitions in which they have to represent their respective district or state or nation, and to be able to be selected among so many candidates requires rigorous practice sessions and perseverance, hence sportspersons are more focused on personal growth. For non-sportspersons the dimension might be a bit different as they have a diverse field on which they are focusing.

In factor four, positive relations with others; the non-sportspersons score more than the sportspersons with a very less difference. This might be because the students were mostly from 2nd and 3rd year of their college and by this time students are usually well adjusted with their peers etc in college and also, their adjustment in their homes too must be better. The fact that the sportspersons have less time to lend to other things than non-sportspersons has a significant effect and is evident from their scores. As the difference is very less between the two groups' score, the sportspersons do not lag too behind. While being in teams and coordinating with each person involves communication skills hence sportspersons also experience positive relations with others.

In factor five, purpose in life; the sportspersons ace here too and the explanation that can be associated with it is clear as they have already decided what the purpose of their lives are. There is a set perspective in their lives and they are constantly working in that very direction that is their respective sport. The non-sportspersons might be caught among the various career choices at this point of their lives and this time must be a very crucial time to decide their purpose in life ultimately because there are so many options to confuse them at this age.

In last factor, self-acceptance; the sportspersons score a bit more than the non-sportspersons. The sportspersons tend to feel more confident and positive about themselves, as per the comparison of the scores. Most of the sportspersons were content with what they have made out from their lives so far but not to forget that they have also aced in the factor of personal growth too which means they are at peace with their pasts but have not stopped working towards expanding their abilities.

Sports have been known to bring about an overall development of an individual. Reconsidering this statement, this study was focused on determining the factors which lead to better psychological well-being of sportspersons and comparing with the non-sportspersons. When the overall scores were compared, it was found that the sportspersons score more than those not involved in any kind of sport. The age group taken for this research is one where individuals take vital decisions of their lives like choosing their careers and this the period of life where the individuals enter the adulthood and there are new responsibilities that they have to look after. Hence, analyzing the psychological wellbeing of people and the factors determining it, becomes very essential.

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH:

It must be addressed that the respondents in the study were individuals dependent on their parents or significant others for their needs and not living by their own, so this gives scope for a further study, to be extended towards working professionals and professional sportspersons to be analyzed for their psychological wellbeing.

7. CONCLUSION:

This research is based on the six factor model of psychological well-being developed by Carol Ryff's theory which takes into account the six factors which affect an individual's psychological wellbeing. When psychological wellbeing of sportspersons and non-sportspersons was compared taking into account the factors, it was found that the sportspersons ace in factors- autonomy, personal growth, purpose in life and self-acceptance while the non-sportspersons were found to be better at environmental mastery and positive relations with others. The sum total of scores of the two categories of individuals in this study indicates that sportspersons have better psychological wellbeing than non sportspersons.

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