



ISSN:1991-8178

Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences

Journal home page: www.ajbasweb.com

The Importance of Psychological Factors for Male Hockey Goalkeeper

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 3 October 2015

Accepted 10 October 2015

Published Online 13 November 2015

Keywords:

Self-Talk, Imagery, Mental Training,
Men's Field Hockey Goal Keeper.

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between psychological factors (Self Talk and Imagery) with individual preparation and performance (Performance) among men's hockey goalkeeper. The sample involved forty five (n=45) male hockey goalkeeper selected through random sampling. The findings are analysed by using computer software, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22. The results of the analysis will indicate two important findings: Firstly, the Self Talk factor used as a mental exercise in preparation has a significant correlation to performances and secondly, the Imagery factor during preparation too has a significant correlation to performance. Since the study is the first of its kind in Malaysia, it will help improve the performance of the national hockey team, increase research in this field and also serve as a guide to the national hockey team athletes, especially of men's hockey teams.

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To Cite This Article: Mohar Kassim and Izham Md Isa., The Importance of Psychological Factors for Hockey Male Goalkeeper. *Aust. J. Basic & Appl. Sci.*, 9(34): 98-102, 2015

INTRODUCTION

The game of hockey was first introduced in the international arena as early as the 1890s. Hockey has become an increasingly popular sport after that. The game was openly demonstrated during the Olympic Games held in Paris in 1900. Hockey has become one of the competitions in the Olympic Games in 1928. One hundred years later, hockey has gradually accepted the pattern of change in terms of playing style, rules and tools, but the original values that exist in the game remain the same.

In terms of history and time, this game has been around for more than 4000 years. Around 2000 BC, a wall in a dining room in Greece was engraved with motifs that show some techniques were applied to handle or maneuver a ball such as in a hockey game. In Rome also, there is a wall sculpture that showed the characteristics of hockey playing and this is more or less the same as in Paris and also Greece, as is stated in the Sports Exercises Module (2012).

In the case of Malaysia, the game was first introduced in 1948 when the country was under British administration. At that point, the National Hockey Council includes Singapore. Currently, Malaysia has a national hockey team and also state teams as well as club teams. However, the hockey teams still has not reached impressive achievement and it is a huge challenge to bring the country's team to international level. Malaysian hockey player's

lackluster performance can be seen as quite inspiring. So this study will try to look at the psychological aspect of hockey goalkeepers and their impact on goalkeepers' performance. (Mohd Noor *et al.*, 2010).

Through the study of sports psychology, psychological factors can be investigated with regard to helping athletes succeed in competition. Such studies have been carried out by Blumenstein *et al.* (2008) and Samulski *et al.* (2008) who studied the relevant scientific knowledge on psychological factors which are associated and influence performance of athletes at the Olympics level.

In addition, Gould and Maynard (2009) also conducted a research on the psychology of athletes as well as a comprehensive and dynamic approach to identify physiological changes experienced by athletes. The results showed that there are 14 changes in the psychology of athletes before the Olympics; eight changes took place during sports and 11 changes in the phase after sports. Clearly, this shows that psychological changes in athletes are bigger in the phases before and after any match.

Costas, *et al.* (2013) investigated the effects of psychological, psychophysical and ergogenic effects of music in outdoor activities during training. The study found that the ergogenic effects of music influence participants to swim faster (no music controls motivation is 2.1% faster than the normal control). The study was conducted during swimming

competition at the Olympic Games London 2012, where is focused on percentage difference in time between the first and fourth place winners. For the 200m freestyle men, the percentage difference was 1.8%; and for the women, the difference was 1.9%.

This shows that participants who apply psychological training will get the same or better results than the percentage of time during practice where Tate *et al.* (2012) posited that the application of music during practice brings greater benefits for participants.

Research model can be seen as overall frameworks used to look at reality to identify a study is based on (Clarke, 2005). A model is an important element of any scientific method it stands on what was being studied. It is widely used and there are many types of models and two major ones are qualitative and quantitative models.

For this study, a model is established by using random sampling method. Model sampling refers to the way subjects are selected for study and divided amongst different groups; and it is also subjected to the data being collected.

Problems in sports psychology are not only faced by athletes and sports team, but other parties Mohd Nizar (2014). Studies on athletes or teams are normal, but the study on the psychological state of hockey goalkeepers has not been done. Goalkeepers' reflexes are studied because they carry the same responsibilities as other players, especially when the team is faced with a penalty shot.

2. Research Objectives:

The objectives of this research are as follows :

2.1 To identify the effectiveness of 'Self Talk and Imagery' related to the performance of hockey goalkeepers.

2.2 To compare the performance of goalkeepers who have gone through mental training and those who have not.

2.3 To develop guidelines that can be used to improve goalkeepers' performance.

3. Conceptual Framework:

Based on the literature of previous studies, a conceptual framework is derived as shown in Figure 1. Now and Bougie (2009) and Zamalia (2009) stated that any differentiated value can be a variable and classified as independent and dependent variables in a study.

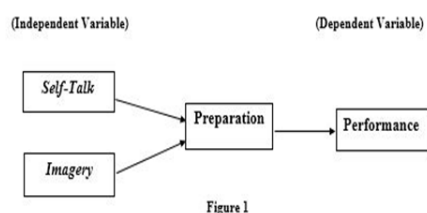


Figure 1

Fig. 1:

4. Research Questions:

It is well known that the role of the goalkeeper is very important. In addition, there are some issues that need to be considered when carrying out this study. Amongst them is to see whether the performance of the men's hockey goalkeepers will increase with the application of psychological techniques such as 'self-talk and imagery'. The next issue is to examine whether the techniques in psychology and mind training provided are capable of forming an effective model to serve as a guide in improving the performance of the men's hockey goalkeepers.

5. The Importance Of The Study:

The study is very important to help the national hockey team to improve their performance during competitions. This study focuses only on goalkeepers because the role of the goalkeeper is seen as directly important. Goalkeepers are the very last line of defence and responsible to stop the opponents from scoring. In addition, it is hoped that the results of this study can be used in developing a psychology model that serves as a guideline and reference to coaches and goalkeepers whether at schools, national and at international level.

In fact, the psychological model may also be referred to by athletes of other sports or games as it involves the use of applicable variables which are self-talk and imagery; which can assist athletes improve their athletic performance. The results of this study can also be used as an academic reference which is useful for future research in psychological aspects related to hockey goalkeepers; which is still lacking.

6. Research Methodology:

The research utilizes survey method as the main instrument for collecting data, which will then be described quantitatively. A pilot study will be conducted as a part of data collection process in which a group of individuals will answer the questionnaire developed solely for this study. This method is more practical because it requires the study of multiple samples. In addition, the study will also conduct interviews and data from both questionnaire and interviews will be triangulated to obtain high quality data and also to avoid bias in data collection (Creswell, 2009; Kassim, M, 2008).

The survey questions contained the variables that were established to fulfill the objectives of the study. The survey is distributed to respondents who are male hockey goalkeepers. The interview will also be extended to hockey coaches in helping to identify and verify problems encountered by hockey teams and problems mentioned in literature. The accumulated information will credibly support the results obtained from survey data analysis through SPSS Version 22.

6.1 As mentioned above, one of the methods to be used in this study is through questionnaires. The questionnaires are divided into two sections: respondents' demographic factors and psychology factors. Demography questions include age, gender, and level of training. Psychology questions are divided into three parts. The three parts consists of two independent variables that are self talk and imagery, and one independent variable that is performance. The questions are adapted from questions found in literature and previous studies done by scholar and academicians on similar topic. The questionnaire has a Likert's Scale from 1 to 5. The questionnaires are distributed to 45 students for pilot study data collection.

6.2 Another data collection technique is the interview. The questions forwarded to respondents during the interview are related to the problem statement and research questions of this study. This is to identify the validity of the problem statements and research questions; whether this study should be conducted or whether there is no problem at all in this field of studies.

7. Literature Review:

In the process of reviewing the literature related to coaching effectiveness, it was discovered that educational literature has an influence on coaching effectiveness and effective coaching. Salmela (1995) defined the term "effective" as how the coaching process is integrated and managed, and the term "effectiveness" as the coaches involvement in long durations of the training period, and both of these terms are essential when judging coaching and coaches (Lyle, 2002). Lyle (2003) defined the term "effective" as "having the intended effect" (p.253). It means the 'result' of the coaching performance or achieving performance goals based on existing resources including athletes' abilities. The term "effectiveness" however is used to describe appropriate behaviour in coaching which concentrates more on developing competencies rather than success in competition. From my point of view, the effort to ensure coaching effectiveness needs reflection on the process of teaching and learning and not a process of passive instruction.

The concept of coaching process has been well discussed over the last two decades. Lyle (1986, 1992, 1999), however claims that there is a lack of discussion about how the concept of coaching process materializes in the coaching practice which involves a complex range of behaviour, activities, interactions, processes, individuals, and organisational functions. As Lyle (2003) defines:

"the coaching process is the contract or agreement between athlete and coach and consists of the purposeful, direct and indirect, formal and informal series of activities and interventions designed to improve competition performance" (p.40).

This links with Borrie's (1996) view that the coaching process is meant to help the player learn and improve a particular skill. The term 'coaching process' is the most suitable term to describe the relationship between coach and athlete in order to improve performance. Indeed, "the coach-athletes relationship requires sophisticated insight into the coaching process and its application in a variety of context" (Lyle, 1999, p.4).

Furthermore, Lyle (2005) defined the term 'participation coaching' as best describes contexts in which the principal goal is not competition success. As such, the performers are less engaged in the process, and may be concerned with improvement in order to enjoy participation and its immediate satisfactions. The emphasis is on participation rather than preparation.

On the other hand, 'performance coaching' is the more appropriate term for coaching processes involving athletes who are preparing for competition and who set longer-term goals. This information, shows that the same scenario takes place in the Malaysian coaching context, where the sports programmes derive more from a 'competition base' rather than 'development base'. This is the routine which takes place in the Academy Football programme in the present study. Every weekend, the team has to compete and the coaches have to prepare their team for winning the weekly competition.

In other words, participation coaching focuses more on single session of training, whereas performance coaching may need to concentrate on planning, monitoring, and managing.

These skills are very important because they are part of the coaching process. Although the coaching process is quite complex, the skills in the process have a great influence on performance in the sports setting (Lyle, 2005). Coaches are expected to produce successful athletes, but often have little control over the talent of athletes with whom they are working. Coaches can prepare athletes in proper conditions but the ultimate performance is not within their control (Côt  t. *al.*, 1995). I am of the view that before a coach becomes involved in participation coaching or performance coaching, the coach must understand the learning process, the athletes', development, the athletes' motivation and identities (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004). This is significant because all the athletes are engaged in a process of learning, which involves important aspects interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. The coaches need pedagogical content knowledge if they are to coach the athletes more effectively (Shulman, 1999).

8. Expected Results:

Construction of sports psychology model will help coaches identify the level of anxiety while enhancing the performance of hockey players. In addition, this model is expected to help the player instantly reduce anxiety to a minimum level. In

addition, this study also seen as having the potential to be an academic reference for hockey teams from Asean, Asia and international level. Finally, it can provide information to all parties involved in order to draw up any sports programme in controlling and reducing players' level of anxiety and enhance winnings.

9. Conclusion:

This study is a basis in developing a new framework or model to be used by the national hockey team to improve their performance through the goalkeepers' roles. However, this study focuses and specifically concentrates on male hockey goalkeepers only in terms of psychology factors, such as self talk and imagery.

This study utilizes research instrument which are questionnaires and interview. After identifying the variables and developing the questions for the questionnaire and interview session, a pilot study will be conducted to pre-test the instrument and provide vulnerable insights to make the research success.

The effectiveness of the variables that have been set up to seek the relationship between the psychological factor and the performance of the men's hockey goalkeeper is also investigated through the pilot study.

The total number of respondents for the pilot study is 45 persons. The findings from the questionnaire will be used to analyse the relationship between the two aspects. The respondents for the interview include coaches for men's hockey teams to get the whole picture of the problem statement and research questions. If their responses have similarities with the findings obtained from the questionnaire, then it can be deduced that this study is very relevant and should be carried out and completed in order to help enhance our sports achievement at international level.

Greater importance should be placed on the review of the coach education programme to ensure the effectiveness of the programme in producing competent coaches and quality players in future (Kassim, M. 2008). In addition, Kassim.M (2008) stated that Training and competition are elements of the coaching process and become important indicators for the hard work undertaken by the players to enhance performance.

As such, the physical, tactical and technical training carried out by the coaches were meant for the players to develop their skills and prepare themselves physically and technically for national and international tournaments.

In addition, Kassim. M (2008), in the coaching process, apart from the coaches, the players, as the coaching recipients are the other important element in the process. The transfer of knowledge to the players is very important in the coaching process.

Coaches cannot rely on their knowledge per se, but they should know how to organize and apply or make use of their knowledge in a particular sport. If coaches failed, it will affect the quality of coaching. This has been supported by Rink *et al.*, (1994), stated that The way coaches organize and structure their knowledge very much related to the experience of the coaches.

Hence, the present study offer significant contributions to hockey development in Malaysia. This study extends the previous research on hockey goalkeeper since there is very little literature that elaborates the impact of knowledge and behaviour of coaches the performance of players. None of the previous authors looked at the hockey goalkeeper performance and previous models of the coaching process.

This study also fills an important research gap on the Malaysian hockey team since to date no research has been carried out in Malaysia on the area of goalkeeper performance, particularly at the national level. Thus, the study of the hockey goalkeeper in this study will add to the literature on goalkeeper performance in the country. The acquisition and development of hockey goalkeeper will need to be given serious attention in coaching practice and performance of the Malaysian hockey team in.

The changes in the syllabus and contents of the coach education programme also need to be made by the Malaysian Hockey Council to include more practical coaching content, including the mentoring programme.

This would realize the concept of reflection on action and learning through experience (Gilbert & Trudel, 2006) which is crucial in the context of the coaching process. This means the implementation of the coach education programme for the hockey team needs to be improved, including the incorporation of practical coaching aspects in the coaching manual, the prolongation of the hockey season and the development of a formalized mentoring programme among the coaches at the national level.

The time has come for the Malaysian Hockey Council as the governing body to realize the importance of major improvement and modifications to be made to the coach education programme, starting with the programme at the academy level. More focus should be made to develop successful players through quality coaching programmes and competent coaches in the academy for the benefit of the sports development in the country, particularly hockey.

Greater importance should be placed on the review of the coach education programme to ensure the effectiveness of the programme in producing competent coaches and quality players in future. Future research should also continue to examine the role and involvement of more parties or agencies in

the development of the coach education programme in the country

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