



The relationship between team cohesion and anxiety on team sports student athletes

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between team cohesion and anxiety on team sports student athletes. The population of the study consisted of 250 student athletes were selected as a sample. The results of this study indicate that there was significant relationship between team cohesion and anxiety. There was positive significant relationship between individual attractions to the group – task and group integration-social with anxiety. Also, there was a not group integration-task and individual attraction to the group-social with anxiety. Team cohesion and anxiety is important factor on athletes performance.

Keywords: team cohesion, anxiety, team sports, student athletes

INTRODUCTION

Team cohesion focuses on how being a part of a group influences performance as well as how psychosocial factors influence group behavior, group performance better and group members are most satisfied when they are cohesive that is, they stick together remain united in pursuing goals. Cohesion is facilitated by emphasizing uniqueness or a positive identity related to group membership and also when individual team members understand and accept their role within group [1]. Cohesion has been defined as “a dynamic process that is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs” [2]. Cohesion also involves feelings of interpersonal attraction to other team members, as well as the group itself. Over the years, research has shown team cohesion to be a multidimensional concept, not a unidimensional one. Athletic teams are beginning to show an interest in experiential team building activities in order to enhance their team's performance as a cohesive unit [3]. The intuitive assumption amongst coaches is that cohesive teams are likely to be more successful than noncohesive teams [4]. Research on cohesion within the sport and exercise psychology context has been based on Carron's [5] conceptual framework. This conceptual framework remains widely influential to the contributions found in cohesion literature and has led to the development of a model by Carron et al [2] which assumes that each sport team develops perceptions of cohesiveness which are categorized as group integration (the perception of the team as a whole), and individual attractions to the group (the personal attractions to the group). Hardy et al. [6] report that four dimensions accounted for the majority of the variance in team cohesion. These are Group-Integration-Task, Group-Integration-Social, Individual Attraction to Group-Task and Individual Attraction to Group-Social.

The importance of cohesion for individual, team sports may be attributed to a number of factors, including: minimizing rivalry among team members, increasing intra-team cooperation, enhancing social support, raising norms for productivity, increasing satisfaction and enjoyment, and lowering anxiety. Not all of these potential mediators of the cohesion-performance relationship for teams have been investigated, but research has confirmed the positive impact of several of these variables.

Anxiety is a negative emotion that affects perceptions in sport competitions, and this leads the majority of athletes to consider anxiety as debilitating towards performance, which may result in a decrease in performance [7]. Martens et al. [8] developed the multidimensional model of anxiety where a distinction on reactions of anxiety in sport is presented, “cognitive anxiety is usually defined as the mental component of anxiety and is caused by negative expectations” while somatic anxiety “refers to the physiological and

affective elements of the anxiety experience that develop directly from autonomic arousal". A third dimension related with the above two is an individual difference factor, which is self confidence, understood as the conviction of the athlete that he can perform the tasks which he has undertaken. Cognitive anxiety and self-confidence represent the opposite ends of a continuous cognitive assessment. Martens et al. [8] propose a negative linear relationship between cognitive anxiety and performance, and a positive linear relationship between self-confidence and performance. Somatic anxiety and performance have a curvilinear relationship, where both lower and higher values are prejudicial to performance. Some researchers examined the relationship between team cohesion and anxiety. The relationship between group cohesion and competitive state anxiety appears to be a dynamic one in which both variables influence each other [9]. This also speaks to the degree of team cohesion. That is "improving the dynamics of the team could enhance the psychological state of the individual" [10]. Additionally, Cogan and Petrie [11] found that an intervention program with intercollegiate gymnasts was associated with enhanced social cohesion and reduced somatic and cognitive anxiety. Also, a significant number of the athletes who required consultation were those who were suffering from anxiety, before and during competitions [12]. Prapavessis and Carron's [10] findings revealed that cohesion and anxiety were associated. Particularly, athletes that perceived higher levels of task cohesion reported a state of less cognitive anxiety. Results also evidence that psychological costs associated with membership on cohesive teams, mediates the cohesion – state anxiety relationship. However, benefits of group cohesion go beyond the degree of competitive state-anxiety. Eys et al. [9] indicate that participating in a cohesive group leads to higher self-esteem, increased group-efficacy, better mood and higher dissemination of responsibility among group members. Additionally, individuals who participate in a group sport are less likely to experience competitive state-anxiety in general [13]. Courneya[14] provided additional support for a cohesion-affect link by showing that perceptions of group cohesion were associated with positive feelings towards structured exercise classes. Also, Borrego et al [15] indicate that only cognitive anxiety relates in a significantly negative way with the perception of cohesion (GI-T e ATG-T) in the total number of participants and in male athletes. Relatively to the somatic anxiety, it only relates negatively with the perception of the integration of the group in the total number of participants and in the male gender. Therefore, the current research question is there relationship between team cohesion and anxiety on team sports student athletes?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participant

The population of the study consisted of 15000 of South, North and Central Azad Teharn universities that the 250 student athletes were selected as a sample.

Measures

Cohesion. Cohesion was measured using the Group Environment Questionnaire (Carron, 1985). The GEQ is an 18-item scale that assesses four dimensions of cohesion (GI-T, GI-S, ATG-T, and ATG-S). All items are scored on a 9-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 9 (strongly disagree). Research has shown that the GEQ is internally consistent [2] and exhibits content, factorial [2], predictive and concurrent [16] validity.

Competition Anxiety: Competition Anxiety was measured using Sport Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) [8]. SCAT is a 15 item scale that all items are scored on a 3-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (rarely) to 3 (often). In this research the alpha Cronbach's coefficient was 0.70.

Methods

The method of the study is descriptive correlational. The data was collected using questionnaires and through field study procedure. Descriptive statistics were used for describing and categorizing raw data and for measuring Mean, frequency, SD and table drawing. Regression and Pearson coefficient were used. For analyzing data the SPSS software was applied and 93% of confidence level was considered.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of table 1 indicate that the highest frequency for age is belonging to 19-24 range. In regarding to gender women has highest frequency.

Table 1: Demographic information of athletes

Variable	Range	Frequency	Percent
	19-24	143	59.6
	25-30	85	35.4

Age	31-36	7	2.9
	Up to 36	4	1.7
	Total	239	100.0
Gender	Men	107	44.6
	Women	131	54.6
	Total	238	100
Educational course	Physical education	210	87.5
	Other courses	8	3.3
	Total	240	100

The result of table 2 indicates that there was significant relationship between team cohesion and anxiety. There was positive significant relationship between Individual Attractions to the Group – Task and Group Integration-Social and anxiety. Also, there was not Group Integration-Task and Individual Attractions to the Group-Social with anxiety.

Table 2: Pearson coefficient between team cohesion and anxiety

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Individual Attractions to the Group-Social	31.68	8.66	1				
Individual Attractions to the Group – Task	31.18	9.33	0.39**	1			
Group Integration-Task	30.37	9.25	0.15**	0.11	1		
Group Integration-Social	22.70	7.32	0.32**	0.56**	0.32**	1	
anxiety	42.60	16.06	0.10**	0.16*	0.10	0.18**	1

As the results of table 3 indicate that team cohesion subscales can predict 18% anxiety.

Table3. Regression associated with prediction of Anxiety according team cohesion and its subscales

	R	R ²	F (df)	Team cohesion	B	Beta	t	Sig
Anxiety	0.18	0.04	17.66*(4.395)		15.52		16.34	0.00
				Individual Attractions to the Group-Social	0.12	0.18	2.79	0.01
				Individual Attractions to the Group – Task	0.05	0.69	0.49	0.04
				Group Integration-Task	0.09	1.15	0.25	0.07
				Group Integration-Social	0.05	0.71	0.48	0.05

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between team cohesion and anxiety on team sports student athletes. The results of this study indicate that there was significant relationship between team cohesion and anxiety. There was positive significant relationship between individual attractions to the group – task and group integration-social with anxiety. Also, there was a not group

integration-task and individual attraction to the group-social with anxiety. It means that individuals that experience high cohesion the perceived anxiety as rational way and used their ability to coping with this situation; they believed that the result of this coping is learning and experience, as a result this individual experience low anxiety and because experience more anxiety lead to psychological, so more team cohesion may lead to improve psychological health. This result is inconsistent with Borrego et al [15] and Eys et al. [9]. The possible reasons to this inconsistency could be different instruments and differences between elite sports with amateur situation. Also, the result of this study was consistent with Prapavessis and Carron's [10].

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