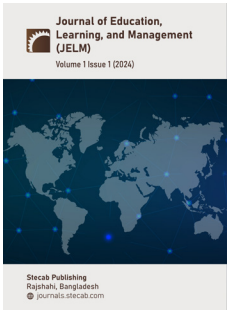

Journal of Education, Learning, and Management (JELM)

Volume 1 Issue 1, (2024)

https://journals.stecab.com/index.php/jelm

Published by
Stecab Publishing

Research Article

The Power of Emotion: A Study on Afghan Athletes in Nangarhar Province

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About Article

Article History

Submission: May 19, 2024
Acceptance : July 07, 2024
Publication : July 30, 2024

Keywords

Sport Emotion, Afghan Athletes

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to measure the sport emotion among Afghan martial arts and non-martial arts athletes. A total of 50 athletes from different sports (aged 18-30 years) were selected for this study. The Sport Emotion Questionnaire (SEQ), which was developed by Jones et al. in 2005, served as the research instrument for this study. The research found a significant difference in sport emotion among Afghan athletes in Nangarhar Province. The results showed that the mean scores for happiness emotion and excitement emotion were the highest among all emotions in Afghan athletes in Nangarhar Province. Among negative emotions, Afghan athletes had the highest scores in anxiety emotion and the lowest score in anger emotion. The outcome of this study can help Afghan sportsmen achieve better results in future sports events and tournaments.

Citation Style:

Saad, J. (2024). The Power of Emotion: A Study on Afghan Athletes in Nangarhar Province. *Journal of Education, Learning, and Management, 1*(1), 17-21. https://journals.stecab.com/index.php/jelm/article/view/61

1. INTRODUCTION

Emotions are individualized sensations that are felt subjectively in response to different situations, whether they are in the athlete's external environment, like entering the field of play, or within the athlete's internal thoughts, such as the anticipation of an upcoming event (Lazarus, 2000). Emotions generally consist of three types of reactions: physiological responses, such as increased respiration and heart rate; cognitive responses, including changes in attention, perception, and priorities in information processing; and behavioral responses, like aggression towards an opponent or showing displeasure at a decision made by an official (Lazarus, 2000).

It has been found that emotions experienced before and during a sporting event are connected to performance (Beedie, Terry, and Lane ,2000; Craft, Magyar, Becker, and Feltz ,2003; Hanin ,2010; Hanton, Neil, and Mellalieu ,2008; and Jokela and Hanin,1999). It is suggested that appropriate emotional responses can have beneficial effects on athletes. For instance, Perkins, Wilson, and Kerr (2001) found that these responses can enhance an athlete's maximal strength. Additionally, Moll, Jordet, and Pepping (2010) discovered that they can improve the quality of interaction with teammates. Furthermore, Beedie and Lane (2012) and Hagger, Wood, Stiff, and Chatzisarantis (2010) found that they can reduce the risk of losing self-control. Moreover, Devonport, Lane, and Hanin (2005) found that they can also reduce the risk of injury. Lastly, Wagstaff, Fletcher, and Hanton (2012) found that appropriate emotional responses can improve interpersonal and organizational dynamics within a sports team.

Emotional states play a significant role in predicting sports performance (Beedie et al., 2000). Athletes have been found to actively manage their emotions in order to optimize their performance (Totterdell & Leach, 2001; Hanin, 2003, 2010; Jones, 2003; Robazza et al., 2006; Ruiz & Hanin, 2011). Additionally, there is a consensus among some athletes and sport psychologists that the ability to regulate emotions is a crucial factor in achieving success (Connaughton, Hanton, & Jones, 2002; Gould & Maynard, 2009; Jones, 2003; Terry, 1995; Uphill, McCarthy, & Jones, 2009).

The objective of this research is to determine the extent of variation in sports emotions (anxiety, dejection, excitement, anger, and happiness) among Afghan athletes participating in martial sports compared to those in non-martial sports. The research hypothesis posits that disparities exist in sports emotions (anxiety, dejection, excitement, anger, and happiness) between martial sports and non-martial sports within the Afghan sports community.

3. METHODOLOGY

For this study, a total of 50 athletes (25 martial arts and 25 non-martial arts athletes) from different sports (aged 18-30 years) were selected. The data was collected from Karate, boxing, free fight, running, bodybuilding, cricket, football, and fitness Afghan athletes through distributing the standard questionnaires. The samples were provided with proper instructions, and their consent was obtained before answering the questionnaires. Only willing participants were selected for this study. The Sport Emotion Questionnaire (SEQ), which was developed by Jones et al. in 2005, served as the research instrument for this study. This 22-item questionnaire is specifically designed to measure precompetitive emotions in the context of sports. It evaluates the intensity of various emotions, including anger (annoyed, irritated), anxiety (nervous, apprehensive), dejection (unhappy, disappointed), excitement (enthusiastic, energetic), and happiness (joyful, cheerful).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The statistical analysis of the results is given in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. Shows the overall differences of sport emotion among Afghan athletes

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Anxiety	50	2	19	6.58	3.411
Dejection	50	0	15	4.84	3.490
Excitement	50	4	16	10.86	2.969
Anger	50	0	13	4.20	2.942
Happiness	50	3	16	12.16	3.235

Table 2. Shows groups emotion of both martial arts and non-martial arts Afghan athletes

Variables	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Anxiety	1	25	5.16	2.656	.531
	2	25	8.00	3.536	.707
Dejection	1	25	4.80	4.041	.808
	2	25	4.88	2.920	.584
Excitement	1	25	11.12	3.004	.601
	2	25	10.60	2.972	.594
Anger	1	25	4.16	3.171	.634
	2	25	4.24	2.758	.552
Happiness	1	25	12.92	2.999	.600
	2	25	11.40	3.342	.668

1 = Martial Arts Athletes, 2 = Non Martial Arts Athletes

4.1. Discussion

This study aimed to examine the differences in sports emotions among Afghan martial arts athletes compared to non-martial athletes. For this study, a total of 50 athletes from different sports (age: 18-30 years) were selected. The data was collected from Afghan sportsmen participating in Karate, boxing, free fight, running, bodybuilding, cricket, football, and fitness, using distributed standard questionnaires. The participants were provided with proper instructions, and their consent was obtained before answering the questionnaires. Only willing participants were included in this study.

The results indicated that Afghan athletes have the highest mean score in happiness emotion among all emotions. Furthermore, Afghan athletes showed the second-highest mean

score in Excitement emotion. Positive emotions are anticipated to surface and be recognized as a performance benefit (Skinner & Brewer, 2004). Characteristics such as increased optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1985, 1987; Taylor & Brown, 1988), resilience, hardiness, passion (Vallerand et al., 2006), and mental toughness are linked to higher levels of positive emotion.

The findings of the study further indicated that among negative emotion afghan athletes has highest score in anxiety and lowest score in anger emotion. According to Skinner and Brewer (2004), negative emotions can have a detrimental impact on performance. Lane and Terry (2000) suggested that individuals experiencing feelings of depression, anger, and tension are likely to perform poorly. However, moderate levels of anger and tension, without depression, can actually lead to better performance (Lane et al., 2001). The impact of anger on sport performance can vary depending on the nature of the sport (Davis et al., 2010; Hanin, 2007; Martinent & Ferrand, 2009; Robazza & Bortoli, 2007; Ruiz & Yuri, 2011). Certain sports may benefit from the presence of anger as it can enhance performance, particularly in activities that require strength, involve collisions, or have fewer technical aspects (Martinent & Ferrand, 2009; Robazza & Bortoli, 2007; Ruiz & Yuri, 2011). In highly technical sports, an excess of activation can impede coordination, while anger can have a detrimental effect on performance, especially when athletes believe they have no control over their high energy levels (Hanton, Jones, & Mullen, 2000; Martinent, Campo, & Ferrand, 2011; Martinent & Ferrand, 2009).

The results further indicated that the mean score of Happiness emotion was almost the same for both martial arts athletes and non-martial arts athletes (Martial arts mean score = 12.92, non-martial sports mean score = 11.40). According to Totterdell's (2000) findings, during a competitive match, professional cricket players' happiness levels were linked with the overall happiness of their teammates.

Additionally, the study results revealed that the mean score of Excitement emotion for martial arts athletes was 11.12, and for non-martial sports athletes, it was 10.60. Positive emotions characterized by high levels of activation, such as excitement, demonstrate an individual's hopeful outlook towards favorable outcomes (Skinner & Brewer, 2004). Athletes often express excitement about their performances and believe that this excitement helps them perform better (Robazza, Bortoli, & Nougier, 2002).

The results showed that the mean score of Anxiety emotion for martial arts sportsmen is 5.16, while for non-martial arts sportsmen, it is 8.00. Hanton et al. (2008), who summarized the research on sport anxiety, many athletes continue to perform at high levels even when they report experiencing intense anxiety and believe that anxiety improves performance. Numerous studies have explored the concept of competitive anxiety and have found that athletes often hold the belief that experiencing high levels of anxiety can actually be beneficial for their performance in competitions (Hanton et al., 2008; Neil, Hanton, & Mellalieu, 2009; Ruiz & Hanin, 2004).It has been proposed that anxiety is often considered the most important psychological factor influencing sport performance (Raglin and Hanin, 2000).Anxiety is generally considered to represent uncertainty about achieving goals and coping mechanisms (Lazarus, 2000). It is characterized by tension and trepidation in addition to autonomic nervous system activation or arousal (Spielberger, 1966). In a similar way to anger, anxiety has been linked to both poor and good performance in several studies (Jones, 1995).

The findings presented that the mean score of Dejection emotion for martial arts sportsmen is 4.80, while for non-martial sportsmen, it is 4.88. Studies have shown that a small number of individuals' experience feelings of depression prior to engaging in competitive activities (Hanin, 2000; Terry & Lane, 2000). It has been suggested that the presence of a depressed mood can significantly impact one's performance during such activities (Lane & Terry, 2000). Furthermore, research has found that low performance is connected with depressed mood (Hassmén & Blomstrand, 1995).

The results of this study further presented that the mean score of Anger emotion for martial arts sportsmen is 4.16, while for non-martial sportsmen, it is 4.24. Robazza and Bortoli (2007) found that players commonly experience anger during competitive situations, but they perceive this emotional state as beneficial for their performance. Anger can manifest as hostility towards others, accompanied by thoughts or intentions to cause harm (Kaufman, 1970), and it has been linked to aggressive behavior in sports (Isberg, 2000). Alternatively, anger can be directed inwardly, leading to self-blame, and in such circumstances, it tends to be associated with feelings of depression (Spielberger, 1991) and poor performance (Lane & Terry, 2000). On the other hand, anger can be directed outwardly towards the source of frustration, and in such cases, it can be linked to improved performance (Beedie et al., 2000; Lane & Terry, 2000). Brunelle, Janelle, and Tennant (1999) proposed that anger seems to arise as an inherent consequence of the competitive environment, where opposing forces are pitted against each other in athletic contests. Not only is anger accepted as a natural part of sports, but it is often encouraged and elicited to enhance athletic performance.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to find out the difference of Sport Emotion (anger, anxiety, dejection, excitement, and happiness) among Afghan martial arts and non-martial arts athletes.

The results showed that the mean score of positive emotions of Happiness and Excitement emotion is the highest among Afghan sportsmen.it indicates that afghan sportsmen are happy and excited to the next sports events or tournaments.

The findings of the study further indicated that the mean score of negative emotions of Anxiety = 6.58, Dejection = 4.84, and Anger = 4.20. Among negative emotions afghan athletes have highest scores of anxiety emotion and anger is lowest one. Lane and Terry (2000) proposed that individuals who experience feelings of depression, anger, and tension are more likely to exhibit poor performance. Conversely, individuals who experience moderate levels of anger and tension without depression are more likely to perform well (Lane et al., 2001).

The results presented that there are little differences of mean score of positive emotions of Happiness and Excitement between martial arts athletes and non-martial art sports

(Martial arts mean score = 12.92, 11.12 and non-martial sports mean score = 11.40, 10.60).

The results showed that the mean score of negative emotion of anxiety of non-martial athletes are 8.00 and martial arts athletes are 5.16. There are little differences in anger and Dejection emotions between Martial arts between non-martial Afghan sportsmen (Martial arts mean score = 4.16, 4.80 and non-martial sports mean score = 4.24, 4.88).

Appropriate emotional responses can be helpful for the sportsmen to improve the achievements and get many successes in sport events or tournament. Controlling emotions is closely related to performance. Athletes must have regulated emotions accordingly, especially before the sports events or tournaments. For example, Anger may increase or decrease sport performance depending on the type of sport (Davis et al., 2010; Hanin, 2007; Martinent & Ferrand, 2009; Robazza & Bortoli, 2007; Ruiz & Yuri, 2011). Poor performance is associated with depressed mood (Hassmén & Blomstrand, 1995). Many athletes maintain high levels of performance when they reported feeling intense anxiety and tended to see anxiety as helpful to performance (Hanton et al., 2008).

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