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COMPARISON OF MALE AND FEMALE DIFFERENCES IN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG STUDENT-ATHLETES OF COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ZING, TARABA STATE

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Abstract

This study explores emotional intelligence among student-athletes at the College of Education Zing, Taraba State, focusing on self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. It aims to compare emotional intelligence levels between female and male student-athletes. Drawing on prior research indicating emotional intelligence's role in enhancing athletic performance, the study hypothesizes that female student-athletes possess higher emotional intelligence than their male counterparts. Employing Dr. N. K. Chadha's Emotional Intelligence Test, administered to 30 female and 40 male student-athletes selected randomly, the study conducts a statistical analysis using the t-test. Results reveal a significant difference in emotional intelligence between the two groups, confirming the hypothesis that female student-athletes exhibit higher emotional intelligence levels. The findings are interpreted within the context of societal norms and traditional roles in African culture, particularly in Nigeria, suggesting potential influences on emotional intelligence disparities between genders.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; Student-Athletes; Male; Female.

Introduction

Until recently, studies on emotional intelligence primarily focused on its role in corporate settings, demonstrating that individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to perform more successfully. However, the significance of emotional intelligence in athletic performance has garnered attention, particularly as elite athletes operate within both competitive and training environments where performance is crucially evaluated. Much like IQ or heart rate, emotional intelligence is quantifiable. Recent research conducted at the South Australian Sports Institute suggests that assessing emotional intelligence in the sporting realm is best done using a General Sporting version of the Swinburne University Emotional Intelligence Test. This self-report measure comprises 64 statements assessing how individuals recognize, express, and understand their emotions during athletic endeavors. A recent study conducted examined emotional states linked to success and failure in both sports competition and academic examinations.

The expansion of sport science as an academic discipline has led to increasing numbers of students facing the combined pressures of academic exams and athletic competitions. The findings of our study, illustrated in Figure 1, demonstrate that (a) emotions play a significant role in achieving success, and (b) the emotional profiles associated with success differ somewhat between sports competitions and academic examinations. In comparison to exams, success in sports correlates with feelings of vigor and anger. Crucially, individuals with high emotional intelligence possess the ability to regulate their emotional states according to the demands of the situation. For instance, in high-arousal situations like competitive sports, emotionally intelligent individuals excel at energizing themselves, whereas in scenarios requiring calmness, they excel at inducing relaxation. Our research group has conducted numerous studies exploring the dynamics of emotional intelligence.We have observed that emotionally intelligent individuals frequently employ psychological techniques such as imagery, goal setting, and positive self-talk compared to their less emotionally intelligent counterparts.

Various researches indicate that emotionally intelligent individuals exhibit mental toughness and derive enjoyment from physical exercise. Importantly, it was observed that emotional intelligence is malleable and can be improved through tailored intervention programs. To facilitate this enhancement, we propose a six-stage approach aimed at assessing and implementing strategies for bolstering emotional intelligence: Self-awareness: The ability to recognize and understand one's own emotional states is crucial. This involves identifying

when emotions influence performance and monitoring how emotions evolve over time. Emotion regulation: Learning techniques to manage and regulate emotions in relation to performance is essential. This includes methods for controlling emotional responses and maintaining composure under pressure. Empathy: Developing the capacity to understand and empathize with the emotions of others is key. This involves observing and interpreting verbal and non-verbal cues to discern others' emotional states. Social skills: Enhancing interpersonal communication and relationship-building skills is vital. This encompasses the ability to effectively interact with others, resolve conflicts, and collaborate toward common goals. Motivation: Cultivating intrinsic motivation and resilience is fundamental. This entails setting and pursuing meaningful goals, maintaining optimism in the face of challenges, and persisting in the pursuit of excellence. Continuous learning and practice: Engaging in ongoing learning and practice to refine emotional intelligence skills is essential. This involves seeking feedback, reflecting on experiences, and actively implementing strategies for improvement.

Assessing emotions in athletes can be approached in various ways, with standard psychometric tests being a common method. However, athletes may find repetitive completion of these tests tedious. An alternative is employing an open-ended diary format such as video or audio diaries. To initiate this assessment, athletes are prompted to recall a significant performance-related situation and reflect on their emotions during that time. Encouraging athletes to mentally rehearse the scenario aids in recollection. They then document all emotions experienced and rate their performance, allowing for comparisons between successful and unsuccessful endeavors.

Cockerill (2002) emphasizes that modern sports impose significant demands on athletes, necessitating specialized support to integrate mind and body for success, particularly in professional settings. Sport psychology provides athletes with valuable advice and support in this regard, as psychological factors play a crucial role in athletic achievement. Sport psychologists are acknowledged for their potential to tip the scales between victory and defeat. Consequently, there is a growing demand for psychological services in sports. Indeed, emotions, including anxiety, can manifest in both positive and negative forms. The crucial factor lies in how these emotions interact and the accompanying thoughts associated with these combinations. It is this interplay that determines whether these emotions serve as motivators or demotivators for athletes, ultimately influencing their performance. By understanding and harnessing the dynamics of these emotional states and their associated

thoughts, athletes can utilize them as tools to enhance their performance on the field or in competition. This awareness allows athletes to channel their emotions constructively, turning potential sources of anxiety into drivers of motivation and success.

Statement of the Problem

According to sport psychologist Lawther (1972), studies often depict male athletes as possessing high levels of traits such as self-confidence, extroversion, leadership, dominance, emotional maturity, social poise, aspiration, and consideration for others. On the other hand, female athletes are largely similar to male athletes in these traits, with differences primarily observed in their concern for maintaining a desirable feminine image and sensitivity to societal attitudes toward female participation in sports. Female athletes tend to prioritize appearance and aesthetic aspects in sports. Given these insights, it is suggested that professional athletes of both genders share many similarities in terms of their personality traits and qualities, potentially leading to differences in their levels of emotional intelligence (EI). Therefore, the current study aims to examine disparities in EI between male and female student-athletes of College of Education Zing, Taraba State.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are designed to explore the variances in emotional intelligence between male and female university athletes. Hence, the following specific objectives are formulated to guide the investigation:

1. To assess the emotional intelligence levels of a sample of male and female student-athletes of Education Zing, Taraba State
2. To examine the levels of emotional intelligence concerning specific components: Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Motivation, Empathy, and Social skills among student-athletes of Education Zing, Taraba State
3. To determine whether there is a significant difference in emotional intelligence between genders among student-athletes-athletes of Education Zing, Taraba State
4. To investigate any gender disparities, if present, within the components of Emotional Intelligence, including Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Motivation, Empathy, and Social skills among student-athletes of Education Zing, Taraba State

These objectives aim to provide a comprehensive analysis of emotional intelligence among male and female student-athletes of College of Education Zing, exploring both overall differences between genders and variations within specific components of emotional intelligence.

Hypothesis:

The following hypothesis were tested:

Ho1. There is no significance difference in the EI mean scores between the males and females student-athletes of College of Education Zing, Taraba State

HO2. There is no significance difference in the mean scores on components of EI sub-skills between the males and the female student-athletes of College of Education Zing, Taraba State

Reviews of Related Literature:

In Zamanian et al.'s (2011) study, they compared the emotional intelligence levels of elite athletes across various sports with non-athletes. The study involved 160 women, comprising 90 participants from handball, futsal, and basketball teams competing in the 2009-2010 premier league (30 women in each group), and 70 non-athletes. All participants completed the BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), a questionnaire comprising 15 subscales designed to assess emotional intelligence comprehensively. The statistical analysis revealed significant differences between athletes and non-athletes across several subscales. Specifically, athletes exhibited significantly higher scores in subscales related to problem-solving, happiness, independence, stress tolerance, self-actualization, emotional self-awareness, interpersonal relationships, optimism, self-regard, impulse control, and empathy compared to non-athletes. These findings suggest that participation in elite sports may positively influence various aspects of emotional intelligence.

In Bal et al.'s (2011) investigation, the aim was to discern whether cognitive psychological factors utilized in both competition and training could distinguish athletes engaged in open and closed skill sports. The study enlisted a total of 40 inter-varsity athletes, with 20 footballers representing open-skill sports and 20 gymnasts representing closed-skill sports. Participants completed the Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EIQ16), which assesses 16 emotional competencies related to accurately perceiving emotions in oneself and others, utilizing emotions to aid in thinking, understanding emotional meanings, and managing emotions. The analysis employed a Student’s t-test for independent data to evaluate differences between the two groups. The study underscores the growing interest in emotional intelligence within the athletic domain, with proponents suggesting its potential to enhance leadership performance, team cohesion, and coping mechanisms under pressure (Zizzi et al., 2003).

Palmer et al. (2007) observed that since Salovey and Mayer's seminal work on emotional intelligence (EI) in 1990, several alternative models have emerged (e.g., Bar-On, 1997; Cooper & Sawaf, 1997; Goleman, 1995; 1998; 2001a; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Petrides & Furnham, 2001). These models have offered different perspectives on how to conceptualize and measure EI. While this diversity has enriched the field, it has also led to confusion regarding the nature and scope of the concept. Under the umbrella of EI, various variables ranging from emotional abilities and competencies to so-called 'noncognitive' capabilities and skills have been included. This diversity highlights the need for clarity and consensus in defining and operationalizing emotional intelligence.

Shinde (2011) conducted a study to investigate the differences in Emotional Intelligence and Self-confidence among students based on their type of education, distinguishing between professional and non-professional education. Two groups were selected for the study: professional students (N=50) and non-professional students (N=50) from Aurangabad city. The research utilized the Emotional Intelligence Scale (developed by Hyde, Pethe, and Dhar) and the Self-confidence Inventory (developed by Basavanna). A't' test was employed to examine the disparities between the two groups. The study's findings indicated a significant difference in Emotional Intelligence between professional and non-professional students. However, while there was a significant difference observed in terms of Self-confidence among the students based on their type of education, the nature of this difference was not specified.

In Dev et al.'s (2012) study, the researchers aimed to investigate whether emotional intelligence (EI) could serve as a potential psychological mechanism underlying the low levels of physical activity (PA) adherence among adults in Malaysia, despite the well-established benefits of PA on physical and mental health. The study recruited 172 supporting staff members from a local Malaysian university. The researchers assessed the participants' physical activity levels and emotional intelligence scores. The findings of the study revealed that supporting staff members who engaged in higher levels of physical activity per week exhibited better total emotional intelligence scores and composite subscale scores. These results suggest a positive relationship between increased levels of emotional intelligence and physical activity. Consequently, the study underscores the importance of higher emotional intelligence in combating sedentary lifestyles and promoting physical activity among Malaysian adults.

Antonakis et al. (2009) assert that interest in emotional intelligence (EI) has surged in recent years, becoming a widely recognized concept in both general and applied psychology,

as well as in business settings. However, the authors raise concerns about the validity and meaningfulness of the concept of EI, as well as the measures used to assess it. They explore a series of issues related to EI and leadership, including debates over whether EI is theoretically essential for effective leadership, the most promising types of EI tests, methodological standards for evaluating the importance of EI, insights from neuroscience literature on emotion and intelligence, and evidence regarding the connections between leader EI and follower outcomes. This critical examination aims to provide a deeper understanding of the role of emotional intelligence in leadership and its broader implications.

Dominikus et al. (2009) conducted research to explore the relationship between mental skills and anxiety interpretation among secondary school hockey athletes. The study involved 108 participants, comprising 54 males and 54 females, aged between 14 and 17 years. These athletes were from three secondary schools, with an average participant age of 15.17 (SD=1.18). The findings revealed that while the direction of anxiety interpretation was consistent between male and female athletes, there were differences in the intensity of interpretation, particularly regarding cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and self-confidence.

In Nawi's (2011) cross-sectional study, the primary objective was to identify differences in characteristics between volunteers and non-volunteers concerning emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and personality traits, specifically focusing on four dimensions: psychoticism, neuroticism, extraversion, and lie. A total of 276 subjects participated, with 168 classified as volunteers and 108 as non-volunteers. Three sets of questionnaires were administered to measure Emotional Intelligence, Self-Esteem, and Personality. The findings revealed that there was no significant difference observed between volunteers and non-volunteers in terms of emotional intelligence ($t=0.13$, $p>0.05$). This suggests that emotional intelligence levels were similar regardless of volunteering status among the study participants.

Methodology

The subjects in the study were selected from a group of student-athletes who actively participate in various sporting activities and have represented the college in competitive sports. A total of 70 athletes were included, comprising 40 male and 30 female athletes aged between 21 to 37 years. The selection process involved random sampling to ensure a representative sample of athletes from the competition.

The Emotional Intelligence (EI) Test developed by Dr. N.K. Chadha (a psychologist at the University of Delhi, India) was used. The test consists of fifteen emotional contexts with four near emotionally intelligent responses. The fifteen situations categorized into five

emotional sub skills such as 'self-awareness', 'self-regulation', 'motivation', 'empathy' and 'social skill'. The highly emotional intelligent subject would get a score of 20 and the lower brackets are scores of 10, 5 and 0. The situations are designed to assess one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures. The sum of the scores on the responses to the entire range of fifteen situations were interpreted as 'extremely high' (285 and above), 'high' (from 250 to 284), 'average' (from 176 to 249), 'below average' (from141 to 175).

Analysis of Data and Interpretation:

The collected data were analyzed and interpreted in below indicated tables

Table 1: Level wise Distribution of Emotional Intelligence

level	Male student-athletes	Female student-athletes	Total
Extremely High	0	0	0
high	4	2	6
low	24	16	40
Below average	12	12	24
Total No of subject	40	30	70

***P<.0.05**

Table 1 indicates that tightfisted four male and two female in the High level (0.8%) subject all the subjects in this sample fall under average 40 subjects (56%) with the split up of 24 male (34%) and 16 female (22%) the subjects in this sample fall average and 24 subjects (34%) with the breakup of 12 male (17%) and 12 female (17%) subjects fall in the 'below average' category.

Table 2: Gender-Wise Distribution of Emotional Intelligence

gender	No. of subjects	Mean EI Score	SD	SE	"t"	"t" critical value two tail at 5% level
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Male	40	90.69	12.09	2.02	-2.34	1.96
Female	30	112.47	9.20	3.45		
Total	70	99.79	12.49	1.98		-

***P<.0.05**

The mean EI score of this sample (99.79) indicates that it falls in the category of 'average' (as per the norm given by Dr. N.K. Chada). The gender based EI scores also describe both the male and female in this sample as "emotionally average". The coefficient of variation discloses higher consistency in the response of the female (22%) than in the male (34%) in this sample. However, the difference of 9.43 in the mean score between males and

females student-athletes is found to be statistically significant. The calculated' value -2.34 is greater than the critical value 1.99 at 5 % level of significance. It is inferred that the females evince higher emotional competency compared to the males.

Table 3: Gender-Wise Distributions of the Scores on the Components of EI

Gender	Male		Female		Total	
Self-awareness	26.12	5.12	32.47	2.20	23.12	2.76
Self-regulation	12.15	3.14	28.10	1.38	22.36	2.02
Motivation	30.10	2.16	23.60	2.25	30.46	4.06
Empathy	16.20.	1.36	20.20	2.76	13.20	1.70
Social skill	24.12	1.41	18.10	2.81	11.30	1.95
Total	98.69	12.09	112.47	9.20	99.79	12.49

***P<.0.05**

Table 3 reveals that in all the five components the College student-athletes fall under "average' category. The component 'motivation' ranks first with a mean score of 30.46 and 'Social skills' ranks last with a mean score of 11.30. The females in this sample show lead over the males in all the three components.

Findings:

In this sample, the majority of participants fall under the 'average' emotional intelligence category according to Chadha's norms, with 56% categorized as such, 34% falling into the 'below average' category, and only a small percentage, including two females and two males each, falling into the 'high' emotional intelligence category. Specifically, 34% of males and 22% of females are categorized as 'average', while 17% of both males and females fall into the 'below average' emotional intelligence category. Interestingly, females in the sample exhibit higher emotional competency, with a mean score of 112.47 compared to males' mean score of 90.69, particularly when faced with emotionally challenging situations. Furthermore, the mean scores across all five components of emotional intelligence indicate that females outperform the male student-athletes. This difference in mean scores between males and female student-athletes is statistically significant. The mean score on 'Motivation' is the highest and the mean score on 'social skill' is the lowest.

Conclusion:

It's evident that the College student-athletes at the College of Education Zing exhibit a level of emotional intelligence that falls within the 'average' range. This implies that these students may lack the necessary emotional competency required to excel in sports competitions, as well as in their personal and social lives. Emotional intelligence is essential for athletes to navigate the demands of their careers successfully and to lead personally

fulfilling and socially meaningful lives. Integrating emotional intelligence training into the curriculum and coaching programs for athletes could prove beneficial. Such training could help athletes develop the necessary emotional competencies required to thrive in their respective sports, handle pressure situations effectively, build strong interpersonal relationships, and achieve success both on and off the field. By enhancing their emotional intelligence, athletes can improve their overall performance and well-being, ultimately leading to greater success in their sporting endeavors and beyond.

Recommendations:

Indeed, conducting further research on the topic of emotional intelligence among student-athletes, utilizing different samples and exploring various game situations, could yield valuable insights for coaches and athletic trainers of both genders. By examining emotional intelligence across diverse populations and in various sporting contexts, researchers can identify specific areas where athletes may require additional support and development. For example, future studies could investigate how emotional intelligence differs among athletes from different sports, age groups, or competitive levels. Researchers could also explore how emotional intelligence influences performance in specific game situations, such as high-pressure moments or during team interactions. Additionally, examining the effectiveness of different training methods or interventions aimed at enhancing emotional intelligence in athletes could provide practical strategies for coaches and trainers. Overall, further research in this area has the potential to inform targeted interventions and training programs designed to support athletes' emotional well-being and performance, ultimately benefiting both individual athletes and their teams.

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