

Group Cohesion and Team Performance in Sports

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Abstract:

The psychological dynamism of sports group is an important component of sports psychology. Group cohesion is a major determinant for good performance in team games than personal psychological prerequisites. The purpose of the study was to compare and analyse the effect of group cohesiveness on the performance of intervarsity basketball and volleyball players of both sexes. The samples selected for the study were 384 university players who participated in the All-India intervarsity tournaments. Group Environment Questionnaire by Albert V. Carron was administered. Appropriate Statistical techniques were employed. Group Cohesion variables showed significant positive relationship to performance. The results of the present study provide a general profile and insight of vital psychological characteristics of intervarsity level basketball and volleyball players of both genders and the sport wise (basketball and volleyball) as well as the gender wise differences in group cohesion. The knowledge about the social dimensions of sports, which would help coaches to deal with individual sportspersons and with sports groups in helpful and insightful ways. The findings of the study would assist coaches to communicate more readily with Sports Psychologists in availing psychological services in the testing of athletes, remedial aspects, psychological preparation, and short-term clinical counseling, of emotional problems faced by athletes.

Keywords: Group Cohesion, Individual Attractions to Group-Task, Individual Attractions to Group-Social, Group Integration-Task, Group Integration-Social, Performance.

Introduction

Team cohesion is the elusive ingredient that changes a disorganized collection of individuals into a team. The term 'cohesion' derived its name from the Latin word 'cohaesus', which means to cleave or stick together. Carron (1982), refined the definition of cohesion as a "dynamic process which is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its goals and objectives". Cohesion is essential for a group's existence through which group members become aware, relate, and understand each other (Gill, 1996). A sport team can be viewed as having both social or interpersonal group activities and group task-related activities. While referring to sport groups, Carron and Dennis (1998) listed that a group should have the following features; a collective identity, a sense of shared purpose, structural patterns of interaction, structured methods of communications, personal and task interdependence, interpersonal attraction, a shared common fate and perception of the unit as a group.

Carron (1988) pointed out that existing research examining the effects of team cohesion on performance has resulted in three general results, such as the teams with more cohesion have more success, cohesion is unrelated to performance and the teams with lower cohesion have better performance, which are mixed and contradictory. Positive cohesion-performance relations are reported most often for team sports that require extensive interaction, coordination and cooperation among team members, such as basketball (Gruber and Gray, 1982), hockey (Ball and Carron, 1976) and volleyball (Bird, 1977).

In this age of science, it is our duty to scientifically measure and evaluate those mental aspects of players, which are considered more significant so that further improvement can be made in terms of performance. This

study was undertaken as an attempt to know more about group cohesion variables and their relationship to performance especially in basketball and volleyball involving both sexes.

Hypotheses:

- There will be significant relationships between the group cohesion variables, such as individual attractions to group-task, individual attractions to group-social, group integration-task and group integration-social, to performance among intervarsity level basketball players and volleyball players of both sexes.
- There will be significant differences between group cohesion variables of male (basketball players and volleyball players) and female (basketball players and volleyball players).
- There will be significant difference in group cohesion variables among the four subgroups namely male basketball players, female basketball players, male volleyball players and female volleyball players.

Methodology

Selection of Subjects

- 384 University level players of 37 universities from all over India (192 basketball Players (96 Male and 96 Female) and 192 Volleyball Players (96 Male and 96 Female)
- Age group: 18 - 25 years

Variable Selected:

Group Cohesion (Individual Attractions to Group – Task, Individual Attractions to Group – Social, Group Integration – Task, Group Integration – Social)

Tool Employed

Group Environment Questionnaire by Albert V. Carron

Collection of Data

Data were collected from the participants of All India Inter University Basketball (Male & Female) and Volleyball (Male & Female) tournaments.

Statistical Techniques

Descriptive Statistics, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation, t-ratio, One-Way Analysis of Variance and Scheffe's post-hoc test.

Analysis of Data

The descriptive analysis was adopted to present the data of the selected group cohesion variables namely, individual attractions to group task, individual attractions to group social, group integration task, and group integration social of the male and female basketball and volleyball players. The Pearson's product moment correlation was employed to find out the relationship of selected psychological variables to volleyball and basketball performance of the subjects. The t-ratio was applied to compare the psychological variables among basketball players (men and women) and volleyball players (men and women) as well as among men (basketball and volleyball players) and women (basketball and volleyball players). The one-way analysis of variance was employed for the comparison of the selected psychological variables among the sub groups.

The statistical analyses were done on the collected data and the results obtained are depicted in the following tables (Table 1 to 13).

The descriptive analyses of the selected psychological variables of the subjects are presented in Table 1 to 4.

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Group Cohesion Variables of Basketball Players (M & F)

Variables	Min	Max	Range	Mean	S D
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	Score		Score							
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Individual attractions to Group - Task	16	17	32	32	17	16	24.16	25.31	4.20	3.47
Individual attractions to Group - Social	18	21	40	41	23	21	32.18	32.76	4.54	3.43
Group Integration - Task	25	26	41	41	17	16	32.76	33.47	4.32	3.42
Group Integration - Social	16	19	31	31	16	13	23.61	25.25	4.15	3.18

N = 96 for each category

This table reveals that female basketball players are having better group cohesiveness than male players.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Group Cohesion Variables of Volleyball Players (M & F)

Variables	Min Score		Max Score		Range		Mean		S D	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Individual attractions to Group - Task	13	16	33	31	21	16	20.48	22.07	5.61	2.98
Individual attractions to Group - Social	21	24	41	39	21	16	28.15	29.85	5.15	3.46
Group Integration - Task	21	25	41	41	21	17	29.28	31.10	5.64	3.40
Group Integration - Social	12	16	33	30	22	15	19.21	21.92	4.94	3.21

N = 96 for each category

Table 2 denotes that there is no significant difference between male and female volleyball players in group cohesiveness.

Table 3: Relationship of Selected Group Cohesion Variables to Performance of Basketball (M & F) and Volleyball (M & F) Players

Variables	BB (M)	BB (F)	VB (M)	VB (F)
Individual Attractions to Group - Task	0.74*	0.52*	0.86*	0.71*
Individual Attractions to Group - Social	0.69*	0.62*	0.79*	0.65*
Group Integration - Task	0.63*	0.63*	0.87*	0.43*
Group Integration - Social	0.78*	0.78*	0.54*	0.49*

* N= 96, Significant at 0.05 level, tab $r^{(94)} = 0.25$

Table 3 indicates that significant positive correlations were obtained between all the group cohesion variables and performance among all the groups.

Table 4: t- Ratio Done on Selected Group Cohesion Variables between Basketball and Volleyball Players

Variables	Groups Means		DM	σ DM	t- ratio
	Basketball	Volleyball			
Individual attractions to Group - Task	24.73	21.28	3.458	0.432	8.01*
Individual attractions to Group - Social	32.47	29.00	3.469	0.433	8.01*

Group integration - Task	33.11	30.19	2.922	0.443	6.60*
Group integration - Social	24.43	20.56	3.870	0.417	9.28*

*Significant at 0.05 level $t_{0.05}(382) = 1.97$

Table 5: t- Ratio Done on Selected Group Cohesion Variables between Male and Female Players

Variables	Groups Means		DM	σ DM	t-ratio
	Male	Female			
Individual attractions to Group - Task	22.30	23.68	1.375	0.462	2.98*
Individual attractions to Group - Social	30.16	31.28	1.116	0.465	2.40*
Group integration - Task	31.01	32.27	1.260	0.463	2.72*
Group integration - Social	21.38	23.57	2.183	0.448	4.87*

*Significant at 0.05 level $t_{0.05}(382) = 1.97$

Discussion of Findings

The results of the study indicate that in the case of team cohesion variables namely, individual attractions to group task, individual attraction to group social, group integration task and group integration social, significant positive correlations with performance were found for male and female basketball and volleyball players. When compared, the basketball players were found to be higher in all the four group cohesion variables than volleyball players. This might be because basketball is a more interactive game. In basketball, a good defense requires switching assignments, calling out screens, and blocking out for rebounding. A smooth offense requires distribution of passes, movement without the ball, screens away from the ball and proper spacing among teammates. These maneuvers require close teamwork with members understanding their roles and having common goals. Another finding was that women basketball players were more cohesive in all the four variables than the other groups. Men basketball players were showed more group cohesiveness than men volleyball players and women volleyball players were found to be higher than men volleyball players in all the group cohesion variables. The differences in means of the different subgroups on the different selected psychological variables might have been due to the number of active playing players in both games (number of players in basket ball in one less than volleyball) resulting in greater chances of cohesion than in volleyball.

Discussion of Hypotheses

The findings of this study with regard to the relationships between the group cohesion variables, such as individual attractions to group-task, individual attractions to group-social, group integration-task and group integration-social, to performance among intervarsity level basketball players and volleyball players of both sexes do fully accept the hypothesis formulated for this study. The hypothesis that there will be significant differences between the group cohesion variables of basketball players (men and women) and volleyball players (men and women) is fully accepted. The third hypothesis that there will be significant differences between group cohesion variables of men players (basketball and volleyball) and women players (basketball and volleyball) is also fully accepted.

Results:

- All the group cohesion variables such as individual attractions to group-task, individual attractions to group-social, group integration-task and group integration-social showed significant positive relationship to performance among intervarsity level basketball players and volleyball players of both sexes.
- In all the group cohesion variables basketball players showed significantly higher scores than volleyball players.

- In all the group cohesion variables women players showed significantly higher scores than men players.
- When compared it was found that women basketball players were more cohesive in all the variables among the groups.

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