

Research Paper

A Comparative Study of Spirituality between Male and Female Sportspersons of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

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ABSTRACT

Spirituality is a complex and broad term with no generally agreed upon definition. Cacioppe (2000) conceptualizes spirituality as the discovery of a meaning, a value, or a purpose for one's life and work. Despite its meaningful importance and intellectual plea, spirituality has not been included in the agenda of researchers until earlier decades. The recent spate of attention that funders, administrators and researchers have given to sportspersons' religious and spiritual lives has led to new questions and ideas about the ways that spiritual identities and understandings influence sportspersons' life. The meaning of spirituality, much less its measurement, is a daunting topic for consideration.

The purpose of this study was to examine spirituality and its measurement of male and female sportspersons of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh (AMU). The subjects for the present study comprises of (N=200) sportspersons between the age of 18 to 27, who were randomly selected from the different sports clubs of AMU. The subjects were classified into two main groups in terms of male (n=100) and female sportspersons (n=100) those who participated in their respective sports. The study was carried over four months period. Spirituality Assessment Scale (SAS), developed by Beazley (1997) was used in this study. The findings of this study indicated significant difference between male and female sportspersons in their spiritual status at the .01 level of significance.

Keywords: Spirituality, sportspersons, definitive dimensions, correlated dimensions.

Introduction

Spirituality is central to philosophical-religious traditions that have informed conceptions of the good life since ancient times. In contemporary psychology, the language of mental health and psychological well-being has displaced that of the good life; moreover, the place of spirituality in psychological well-being has been left largely stark. We vindicate for renovating spirituality to its rightful place in contemporary psychology, to which philosophical-religious traditions remain germane. In what follows, we can mention only some of the world's major traditions. However, the notion of equifinality, that the same ultimate goal may be reached from various ways, should counter this limitation to some extent.

"Spirituality" is a complex and broad term with no generally agreed upon definition. Cacioppe (2000) conceptualizes spirituality as the discovery of a meaning, a value, or a purpose for one's life and work. Despite its meaningful importance and intellectual plea, spirituality has not been included in the agenda of researchers until earlier decades. The recent spate of attention that funders, administrators and researchers have given to sportspersons' religious and spiritual lives has led to new questions and ideas about the ways that spiritual identities and understandings influence sportspersons' life. The cause is

that spirituality is an occult concept, into which it is exceedingly tough to conduct research. The core of the problem concerns how spirituality is defined and measured.

The meaning of spirituality, much less its measurement, is a daunting topic for consideration. Individuals who are religious in one respect might not be in another... religion is multidimensional (Hood et al., 1996). It is also with the spirituality. Spirituality is multidimensional concept. The Spiritual Assessment Scale (SAS) developed by Beazley (1997) measures an individual's spirituality as expressed in two dimensions: the definitive dimension (DD) and the correlated dimension (CD).

The definitive dimension refers to a specific set of behaviours that are central to the concept of spirituality. These are prayer and meditation.

The correlated dimension refers to behaviours and dispositions that are not exclusive to spirituality but that contribute to its definition. These behaviours cannot be considered part of the definitive dimension because they may be correlated with influences other than spirituality. These are honesty, humility, and service to others.

Honesty is defined as the quality or condition of truthfulness with self and others, fairness in dealing, and the absence of fraud, deceit, and dissembling.

Humility is defined as modesty in behaviour, attitude, and spirit marked by a willingness to learn, to be wrong, and to put other's agendas ahead of one's own.

Service to Others is defined as an act of assistance or benefit to others.

Definition of the terms

Sports

Sports means all forms of physical activity which through casual or organized participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competitions at all levels (Council of Europe's Sports Charter, 2001).

Sportsperson

A person who's enthusiastic about and participates in sports. One who abides by the rules of a contest and accepts victory or defeat graciously.

Religion

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Religion involves subscription to a set of beliefs which are organized and institutionalized (Sussman et al., 1997).

Hypothesis

1. There will be marked significant difference between the spirituality of male and female sportspersons of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh (AMU).

Methodology

Sample

For the purpose of this study, both the samples were considered the true representative of the sports population of AMU. The subjects for the present study comprises of (N=200) sportspersons between the age of 18 to 27, who were randomly selected from the different sports clubs of AMU. The subjects were classified into two groups in terms of male (n=100) and female sportspersons (n=100) those who participated in their respective sports. The study was carried over four months period.

Research Instrument

Investigators used the Spirituality Assessment Scale (SAS), developed by Beazley (1997) to assess the spiritual status of sportspersons in their life, including demographic data sheet prepared by the investigators to collect the information regarding the sportspersons. The SAS contains two dimensions of spirituality i.e. DD and CD. The SAS included 30 items scale that was developed to evaluate the spiritual status. The SAS has not been standardized on Indian population. The authors have used the test because of the want of any other test of spirituality in literature.

Procedure

The coaches and managers of the different sports clubs of AMU were contacted in person to seek their permission to allow the sportspersons to participate in the study. The researchers administered the questionnaires to the sportspersons during their free time so that they may concentrate on each question at their optimum. The subjects were allowed either to fill the questionnaire in front of the researchers or take the questionnaire to their place. Before completing the questionnaire, all respondents were informed that the honesty in responses was vital to the success of the study. It was also explained that all responses would be kept strictly confidential and would be used only for research purposes. It took 20-25 minutes to conduct the surveys in each setting. Additionally, a cover letter and informed consent form were attached to the questionnaires. Before the analyses were conducted, the informed consent forms were removed from the questionnaires to ensure the anonymity of the participants.

Statistical Analysis

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16 software. The individual scores were summed up to yield a total score. Descriptive statistics were obtained and mean scores, standard deviation, and standard error mean were calculated. The difference of spirituality between male and female sportspersons was assessed by Z-test. The test was chosen to analyze the difference of the two preceding dimensions of SAS. The level of significance was set at 0.01 level.

Result

The result as shown in the Table-1 indicated that significant difference of spirituality between male and female sportspersons because calculated Z value is much more than tabulated Z value. Since, it is obtained that Z value of 6.51 is much greater than the tabulated value Z.01 (= 2.58).

Table-1

Representation of Mean Raw Scores, Standard

Deviations and Z value of male & female sportspersons

Groups	Mean Value	Standard Deviation	Standard Mean Error	Z-Value
Male sportspersons	154.97	14.52	± 1.45	6.51*
Female sportspersons	166.39	9.81	± 0.98	

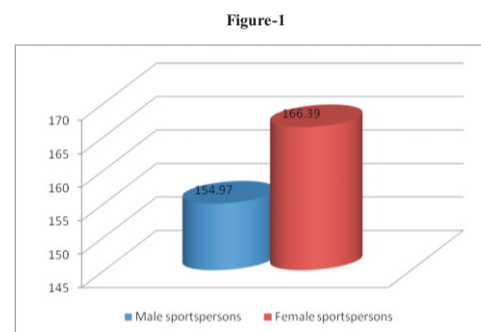
*Significant at .01 level

Tab $Z_{0.01} = 2.58$

Since calculated Z value is much greater than Z.01 (2.58) the hypothesis is accepted at .01 level of significance and we conclude that the average of spirituality differ significantly between male and female sportspersons.

Comparison of spirituality between male and female sportspersons

'Z' test of spirituality is given in Table-1 and graphically portrayed in Figure-1



Discussion

From the analysis of data the marked significant difference was found between male and female sportspersons in their spiritual status as the obtained Z value of 6.51 is much greater than the tabulated value Z.01 (= 2.58). This could be because of the belief that females are cooperative, sensitive, caring, highly emotionally aroused, helping in nature, less dominant than males and they remember the God with the spiritual and religious practices more than males before initiating any task whether it be from daily chores to sports fields. Another reason may be that when female sportspersons are in difficulty or face crucial circumstances they become more conscious/concerned toward God. In the study of Valentine and Feinauer (1993) women reported that spirituality became a source of support, hope, and empowerment, which they sometimes had difficulty finding in other relationships. Likewise, in the study of Grosseohme (2001) 68% of the boys (and 86% of the girls) surveyed responded that their religious or spiritual beliefs were important to them. The higher positive response from the girls parallels other reports (e.g. Markstrom, 1999; Smith et al, 2003).

It is also seen that parents, coaches & others have sometimes higher expectations from female sportspersons due to which they, at times, feel burdened to give their best. To fulfil the demands they remember the God more & more alongwith hard work in their chosen sports due to the curiosity of success and optimum performance in their respective competitions because the participation in those competitions paved the way to selection at the higher level. So, the inclination of the female sportspersons toward God is much greater than male sportspersons.

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