

AGGRESSION, MINDFULNESS AND SELF-ESTEEM AMONG PLAYERS OF COMBATIVE SPORTS

¹Juhi Deshmukh ²Suman Pandey Mahadevan

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, India

²Assistant Professor, Department of Physical Education, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, India

ABSTRACT

Sport is no longer confined to being a source of competition, recreation and fitness and rather has been considered as a potent life skill especially for the young minds. Aggression, mindfulness and self-esteem can serve to be vital skills for players of combative sports. To explore the same, the present research tries to verify the relationship between aggression, mindfulness and self-esteem among players of combative sports. The sample comprises of 110 players of combative sports within the age range of 19 to 23 years from in and around the Pune city. The tools used in this research were Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (Brown & Ryan, 2003), Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg 1965) and Aggression Questionnaire (Pati, 1976). The obtained results show there is no significant correlation between aggression and mindfulness, aggression and self-esteem and there is a positive correlation between mindfulness and self-esteem.

Key words: *Combative Sports, Aggression, Mindfulness & Self-Esteem*

INTRODUCTION:

The sports industry is regarded as one of the most voluminous industries globally all-in terms of entertainment, employment, tourism and revenue. Today sport is no longer confined to being a source of competition, recreation and fitness and rather has been considered as a potent life skill. Sports not only fosters physical health of a person but also instils crucial life skills. Playing a sport leads to self-improvement of an individual across social, emotional, and academic domains (Hayden, et.al, 2015). Sports systematically and in a fun filled way teaches one about teamwork,

leadership, emotion regulation and perseverance (Ghildiyal,2015). There are different types of sports played in India. Sports can be individual, team, indoor or outdoor and also combative, non-combative. Each sport requires mental and physical skills. Some skills are common across all formats of sport however a few require a slightly different skill set or demands a few skills more over the others (Hodge, Sleivert & McKenzie, 1996).

A combative sport is “a competitive activity engaged in by two individuals or teams that models actual combat wherein winning or losing is defined by agreed-upon rules and is substantially determined by physical contact and/or the use of real or simulated weapons by opponents” (Chick,2018). Combative sports are harder when compared to other forms primarily. Firstly, because human beings are not very fast responders. Also due to their one-on-one combat quality the risk of physical injury is factual. In Such sports the player’s ability to overcome setbacks (e.g. lifting a powerful body shot) and deal with adversity (e.g. a dominant group in the crowd cheering for the other guy) is a relatively important predictor of success when compared to many other sports. And thus, it requires higher mental toughness (Matsumoto, Konno & Ha, 2009; Kerin,2008). According to Piskorvska et.al (2016), combative sports require different sets of human traits like aggression, anxiety, vanity etc. and these can always directly impact one’s mental health. That’s why it is of cognizance to understand what are the factors that can impact the self-esteem of a player which can in turn affect the game performance and eventually their wellbeing.

Aggression is an important aspect of sports and is a frequently used term in sports to express assertiveness, enthusiasm or confidence. Aggression can be defined as “any form of behaviour

directed toward the goal of harming or injuring another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment” (Baron & Richardson, 1994). However, aggression in sport is defined in a slightly different manner and is not perceived as explicitly negative (Bhardwaj & Rathee,2013). When it is an assertive behaviour like when one is searching for success, it is highly required (Wlazlo et al. 2007). Most people view aggression as a negative psychological characteristic, however some sport psychologists agree that aggression can improve performance (Widmeyer & Birch, 1984). This is called assertive behaviour (Bredemeier, 1994), where a player will play within the rules of the sport at a very high intensity but will have no intention of harming an opponent. Research also shows that the combat sports practitioners reached a higher level of aggression (Wrześniewski,2015).

Mindfulness is one such state that can enhance sports performance by allowing the person to stay in the present moment and not to wander in either the past or future. Mindfulness can be defined as “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment” (Kabat-Zinn,1994). The main focus of being mindful is to stay aware of the present moment and not judge one’s own thoughts, emotions and perceptions as positive or negative. Birrer et al. (2012) suggest that mindfulness may, indirectly, through a number of certain impact mechanisms, influence several psychological sport-related skills. Researches have also shown that mindfulness is negatively correlated with self-reported aggressiveness (Heppner et.al, 2008; Skelton,1991).

Another factor that impacts the performance of a sportsperson is self-esteem. Research over the years has verified that sports plays an important role in boosting self-esteem of an individual

(Bowker,2006; Bowker, Gadbois & Cornock,2003). Self-esteem can be defined as one's confidence in his or her worth and competence. According to Rosenberg (1965), self-esteem is one's positive or negative attitude toward oneself and one's evaluation of one's own thoughts and feelings overall in relation to oneself. Sports certainly enhances the self-esteem of a player by increasing their self-worth and confidence and also through the appreciation that they receive from society. However, a bad performance or failure makes one more vulnerable to low self-esteem in sports.

Considering the nature of combative sports and the kind of human skills they require it is pivotal to understand what psychological factors influence the self-esteem of these players so that effective mental skill training programs can be designed to enhance their performance and their wellbeing.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The present research aims to study the relationship between aggression, mindfulness and self-esteem among players of combative sports.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the relationship between aggression and mindfulness among players of combative sports.
2. To study the relationship between aggression and self-esteem among players of combative sports.
3. To study the relationship between mindfulness and self-esteem among players of combative sports.

HYPOTHESIS:

1. There will be a negative correlation between aggression and mindfulness among players of combative sports.
2. There will be negative correlation between aggression and self-esteem among players of combative sports.
3. There will be a positive correlation between mindfulness and self-esteem among players of combative sports.

METHODS:

Sample

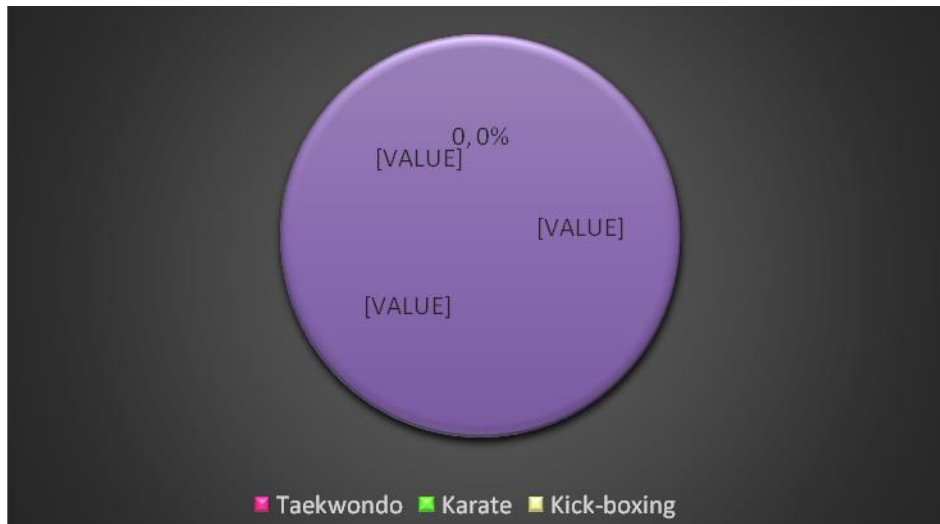
A total sample of 125 combative sport players from various sports academies in and around Pune city were selected through purposive and snowball sampling method. After removing the outliers, a total sample of 110 was retained for analysis. To ensure maximum homogeneity of the sample and considering the variables being assessed, following inclusion and exclusion criteria were used for the study.

Inclusion Criteria

1. Only combative sports players were selected.
2. Players within the age range of 19 to 23 years.
3. Players with minimum three years of experience and maximum five years of experience were included.
4. Only males were included

Exclusion Criteria

1. Players of other sports formats were excluded.
2. Players below the age of 19 and above 23 were excluded.
3. Players with less than three years of experience and over five years of experience were excluded.
4. Females were not excluded.



Distribution of Sample

Tools

Aggression Questionnaire by Pati (1976)

The Aggression questionnaire consists of 16 questions. Each item in the test represents a specific action with three levels of aggressive reactions ranging from low aggression, moderate and high aggression. Reliability coefficient of the aggression questionnaire was calculated by the split-half method. Reliability coefficient .71 was found. The Pearson method r .82 was found.

Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) by Brown and Ryan (2003)

The trait MAAS has been validated for use with student and community adults and for individuals with cancer. MAAS is a 15 item scale designed to assess a core of characteristics of mindfulness. Normative information on the trait MAAS is available for both community adults and college students. The MAAS has demonstrated high test-retest reliability, internal consistency level range from .80 to .90. The validity known group is discriminant, convergent, criterion, predictive of a variety of emotion regulation, behaviour regulation, interpersonal and wellbeing phenomena. Subjects were asked to respond to the items by marking any one of the items ranging from Almost always, Very frequently, Somewhat frequently, Somewhat infrequently, Very infrequently and almost never. To score the scale, simply compute a mean (average) of the 15 items. Higher scores reflect higher levels of dispositional mindfulness.

Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSE) by Rosenberg M. (1965).

RSE has 10 items to measure self-esteem. Originally the measure was designed to measure the self-esteem of high school students. Since its development the scale has been used with a variety of groups including adults, norms available for many of those groups. The reliability coefficient is .92 excellent internal consistency, test retest reliability reveals .85 to .88. The scale is a ten item Likert scale with items answered on a four point scale- from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The validity demonstrates concurrent, predictive and construct.

PROCEDURE:

All the players of combative sports were selected from various sports academies in and around Pune city. Desirable age range was formulated. The test administration was conducted under the formal setting with the prior permission from the players and coaches. The participants were informed in advance regarding the study and their consent was established. The purpose and the aim of the study were conveyed and it was assuring that the results will be kept into absolute confidentiality. In the beginning the instructions were given loud and clear and it was made sure that there were no grey areas left for the participants. After thorough administration participants were asked to share their insights about the study and accordingly feedback was noted. There was no time limit set for the completion of the test but it usually took 30- 35 minutes to answer a set of three questionnaires

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS:

After scoring all the tests which were complete, the data was analysed with the help of SPSS 20.0 software. It was used to carry out analyses for descriptive statistics and Pearson product moment correlation.

RESULTS:

The results showcase the outcome of the statistical analysis of the collected data, consisting of 110 sportspersons.

Table 4.1 Mean, Standard deviation for aggression, mindfulness and self-esteem and for the total sample 110. N=60

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Aggression	64.05	13.58
Mindfulness	29.82	4.04
Self Esteem	477.37	74.12

Table 4.2 Correlation between mindfulness, self-esteem and aggression

Variable	Aggression	Mindfulness	Self Esteem
Aggression	1		
Mindfulness	.062	1	
Self Esteem	-.18	.34*	1

(** $p < 0.01$) (* $p < 0.05$)

DISCUSSION:

Playing sports is much more than just physical strength. Playing shapes various aspects of personality. The present research attempted to study the relation between aggression, mindfulness and self-esteem in players of combative sports. The results show that the hypothesis stating “there will be a negative correlation between aggression and mindfulness among players of combative sports” was not supported, $r = .062$, $p > 0.05$. This means that there is no significant correlation between aggression and mindfulness. The obtained results give a direction that

aggression in sports doesn't necessarily have a negative correlation. Several researches have shown that players of combative sports choose to have an aggressive approach and thus it can be a mindful choice (Kuśnierz& Bartik,2015).

The second hypothesis stating "There will be negative correlation between aggression and self-esteem among players of combative sports was rejected, $r = -.18$, $p > 0.05$. This suggests that there is no correlation between aggression and self-esteem. The results are in line with other research (Curran,2012).

The hypotheses stating "There will be a positive correlation between mindfulness and self-esteem among players of combative sports was accepted, $r = .34$, $p < 0.05$. This shows that as the level of mindfulness increases, self-esteem also enhances and similar results have been reported by other researchers as well (Randal, Pratt & Bucci,2015).

The above research asserts that aggression in sports doesn't necessarily intend to harm someone and self rather is an instrumental way to achieve success in the task at hand. Also, it shows that mindfulness practices can help the players enhance their self-esteem, which surely is a significant correlate of psychological wellbeing.

CONCLUSION:

The results of the study show that there is no significant correlation found between aggression and mindfulness. There was a significant correlation between aggression and self-esteem and there is a positive correlation between mindfulness and self-esteem.

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