

A study of passion and locus of control among athletes and non-athletes

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Abstract

Passion for sports is an essential element for successful performance. It is a strong inclination towards an activity that the individual likes. It serves as a trait that propels the athlete or sportsperson to excel. The current study was designed to compare passion and locus of control among athletes and non-athletes. The sample for the current investigation consisted of 80 participants (where 40 are athletes and 40 are non-athletes) in the age group of 18-23 years. For this purpose, the Passion Questionnaire (Vallerand *et al.*, 2003) and Rotter's Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966) was administered to the sample. The t test was used for statistical analysis of the results in order to compare passion for sports and locus of control in athletes and non-athletes. Results will be discussed in terms of its implications.

Keywords: passion, locus of control, athletes

Introduction

Athlete's at all competitive levels, from Olympians to professionals to collegians to high school and select players, use sport psychology strategies and principles to become mentally tough, improve their training, and ultimately reach their goals in sports competition. They possess a great passion for sports and strive for excellence. They face lot of challenges but still they endeavor to perform with focus, diligence and consistency.

Passion

Passion represents a strong inclination toward an activity that is important, liked, and in which significant time is invested. Vallerand *et al.* (2003) [10] have proposed a theoretical analysis of passion that sheds light on the type of involvement that individuals bring to an activity. Passion is defined as a strong inclination toward an activity that individuals like, that they value, and in which they invest time and energy. Another defining characteristic of passion is that the passionate activity has been internalized in the person's identity. Thus, in line with various theories (Deci & Ryan, 2000) [1], it is proposed that the self becomes more complex over time, in part by internalizing elements of the environment.

Vallerand *et al.* (2003) [10] further posit that two distinct types of passion develop as a result of the type of internalization process that takes place. The first one, obsessive passion, results from a controlled internalization of the activity into one's identity (Sheldon & Kasser, 1995) [9]. Harmonious passion, by contrast, results from an autonomous internalization of the activity into the person's identity. An autonomous internalization occurs when individuals have freely accepted the activity as important for them without any contingencies attached to it (Sheldon & Kasser, 1995) [9]. An athlete must have immense passion for the sport he plays as it influences the performance of the athlete.

Locus of control

Locus of Control is considered to be an important aspect of personality. Locus of Control (Rotter, 1966) [8] refers to an individual's perception about the underlying main causes of events in his/her life.

His conception of locus of control distinguishes two types of individuals, internals, who perceive the likelihood of an event occurring as a product of their own behaviour, and externals, who view events as contingent on luck, chance, or other people. Levenson (1973) [4] believed that an internal orientation will increase one's motivation to continue in an activity, while external orientation decreases one's willingness to persist in an activity she feels she has very little ability to influence. Optimism has been associated with an internal locus of control and pessimism with an external locus of control (Dember, Martin, Hummer, Howe, & Melton, 1989) [2]. Athletes who develop an external locus of control tend to immediately point the finger at all the reasons why they came up short in a game – the coach didn't play me the right way, the officials were terrible, etc. On the other hand, athletes with more of an internal locus of control first look inward when they face adversity, and begin by asking themselves what they could have done different or better so that they wouldn't have failed.

Developing an internal locus of control can dramatically help with sport success, as resiliency and mental toughness are dramatically enhanced as a result of rational thinking. Internal and external control beliefs seem to affect individual's perceptions of outcomes. Research related to locus of control and goal setting has yielded a positive relationship between difficulty of the goal and performance for those with an internal orientation (e.g., Locke & Latham, 1990) [5].

Hypotheses

On the basis of review of literature the following hypotheses

are proposed:

H1: It is expected that there will be significant differences in terms of passion between athletes and non-athletes.

H2: It is expected that there will be significant differences in terms of locus of control between athletes and non-athletes.

Methodology

Sample

The sample for the study was selected from various colleges of Chandigarh. The sample for the current study consists of 80 participants, where 40 are athletes and the other 40 are non-athletes. The subjects range from 18-23 years of age.

Measures used in the study

The current investigation is designed to compare athletes and non-athletes on passion and locus of control. For this purpose, the following tests are administered to the sample:

- a. Passion Questionnaire (Vallerand *et al.*, 2003) [10].
- b. Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966) [8].

Statistical Analysis

After the data for the entire sample has been collected for the psychosocial variables of the investigation, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and t-ratio is applied to it for statistical analyses. The t-test is applied to find if there are any significant differences between the two groups, that is, athletes and non-athletes, in terms of passion and locus of control. The data is depicted in a tabular manner and the results are discussed further.

Results

Table 1: showing Mean, Standard deviation and t- ratio

Variables	Athletes (N=40)		Non- athletes (N=40)		t-test vale
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Passion	101.43	5.12	73	10.94	1.16
Locus of control	8.23	3.11	14.06	3.39	7.81**

**Significant at 0.01 level.

Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to compare athletes and non- athletes on passion and locus of control. As shown by the results in table 1, the t value for passion is not significant. No significant differences have been found between athletes and non-athletes on passion. Thus, hypothesis 1 is not accepted. This may be due to the small sample size. However, previous studies show that athletes are high on passion as compared to non-athletes.

Passion encourages the athlete for long training sessions, effective goal setting, self-efficacy and better performance and athletes exhibit greater amount of passion than non-athletes (Rip *et al.*, 2006) [7]. Significant positive correlation between harmonious passion and self-esteem which enhances sports performance. Obsessive passion was related with persistence which enhances focus, concentration and attention in athletes (Vallerand *et al.*, 2003) [10].

Significant differences have been found between athletes and non-athletes on locus of control as shown by results obtained

in table 1. Thus, hypothesis 2 is accepted. Researchers in sport psychology have focused on the relationship between locus of control and success in athletes than locus of control and the athlete's sense of satisfaction with sport participation.

Frederick, C. M. (2000) [3] found that a sample of college students and college athletes completed measures of competitiveness and locus of control. They concluded in their research that athlete's exhibit internal locus of control rather than external locus of control. Ng, Sorensen, and Eby (2006) found out that high internal locus of control resulted in positive responses from athletes. The greater perceived control an individual possessed, the higher their satisfaction and well-being.

Conclusion

Passion and internal locus of control plays a very crucial role in the life of an athlete. It determines the drive and want for excellence in performance. High level of passion in the athletes will enhance their sports performance, goal setting and prevent burnout too. Internal locus of control aids the athletes to take success and failure in a healthy way. It also helps in faster injury recovery and athletes with internal locus of control tend to be more accountable for their performance.

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