Relationship between Achievement goal Orientation of female Track runner university students and perceived motivational climate in sprint and endurance events

Khalil Alahverdiyani *, Javid Didar, Maysam Mohseni Mones Yadegar

Allameh Tabatabai University, Saadat Abad, Tehran, Iran
Azad Tehran Markazi University, Amamhosin, Tehran, Iran
Allameh Tabatabai University, Saadat Abad, Tehran, Iran
A llameh Tabatabai University, Saadat Abad, Tehran, Iran

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between achievement goal orientation and perceptions of motivational climate in track runner and distance university students. For this reason, 38 College runners including 20 Distance Runner (11 males and 9 females) and 18 Sprint Runner (8 males and 10 females) were selected by random sampling. Data collection was performed by two Achievement Goal Orientation (AGOQ) and Perceived Motivational Climate Questionnaires (PMCQ). Result showed that there aren't significant differences between ego and task orientations and mastery and performance climate perceptions in distance and sprint runners while significant differences were observed between ego and task orientations in distance and sprint runners. Also there was significant and positive relationship between ego orientation and performance climate perceptions in distance runners (r=0.476, P<0.05). Furthermore, significant positive relationships were observed between ego and task orientations (r=0.721, P<0.05), and ego orientation and performance climate perceptions (r=0.48, P<0.05) in sprint runners.

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Keywords: Achievement goal orientation, perceived motivational climate, distance runner, sprint runner, college athlete.

1. Introduction

Discovering and understanding the functions of motivation is one of the important and prevalent topics for research in the field of sport psychology. In the recent years, large amounts of sport psychology literature are produced about individual’s self-image and the effect of this self–image on the motivation (Todorovich & Curtner-Smith (2002)). Previous researches have studied cognitive aspects of running sport included anxiety, goal adjustment, temper, and motivation (Firal and Rogers, 1997; Goudas et al., 1995; Harger and Ragelin, 1994; Huddleston et al., 2003; Mcmanus, 2004). The studies report that there are fundamental differences in the psychological profile of different groups which is related to their psychology.

* khalil.allahverdiyani. Tel.: 0989149180198.
E-mail address: Khalil.psychometric@yahoo.com.
The presupposition to this study is that the goal achievement orientation of the runners is related to their motivational climate and training type. Previous researches have reported on the relationship between these two variables, among some of which incongruities are observed. Also Duda (1996) Roberts and Emanson used 148 physical-education students to determine the way goal achievement orientation of the sportsmen influences their perception of motivational climate. However, Mcmanus (2004) has recently reported different results. He has studies the relationship of goal achievement orientation and perceived goal achievement orientation of track runner university students in sprint and distance running. 20 distance runners and 19 sprint runners participated in this research. The results showed that there is a significant difference between the goal achievement orientation and the perceived motivational climate of the both runner groups. Distance runners also showed higher task achievement orientation and motivational climate. Higher marks of motivational climate perception were reported for the sprint runners. The test of relationship indicated a positive relationship between goal achievement orientation and perceived motivational climate for the both groups. Furthermore, there is a positive relationship between ego orientation and performance climate among distance runners and a positive relationship between task orientation and perceived performance motivational climate among the sprint runners. A negative relationship was also identified between ego orientation and perceptions of mastery climate in the distance runners.

2. Methodology

This research was a descriptive one. And based on the main research question it is correlation.

Sampling
The participants of the study were all the students of power and sprint running who has participated university competitions between 2007 and 2008. The participants were 38 students of university, including 20 distance runners (11 male and 9 females) and 18 sprint runners (8 males and 10 females) were selected using random sampling. Some of the characteristics of these participants are presented in table 1.

Instrument
Achievement Goal Orientation Questionnaire in sport
This questionnaire includes 13 questions and it evaluated two dimensions of goal achievement orientation and task orientation. In this questionnaire a range of 5 in Likert scale ranging from completely agreed (5) to completely against (1). Seven questions 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 appraise goal achievement orientation and the rest appraise task orientation. Reliability and validity of the questionnaire is verified by Duda and Nicolas (1992).

Individual information questionnaire
In order to collect personal information of the participants, a researcher-made questionnaire is used consisting of open and closed questions. This questionnaire collects information about sex, age, sport experience, championship records, and the type of competitive events are collected.

Data collection
Field method is used for data collection in this research. After arranging an appropriate time for presenting the questionnaires with the agreement of authorities and team leaders, the researcher attended arranged place. After expounding on the purpose and significance of the research to the runners, he explained how they should fill the questionnaire. Then, volunteer runners started filling the questionnaires.

Data Analysis
The descriptive analysis of the data was done using central and dispersion indicators. Inferential statistics was used to test the research hypotheses. Independent sample t-test was used to compare the means of distance and sprint runners. Dependent samples t-test also was used to compare goal achievement orientation and perception of the motivational climate. To determine the relationship between variables, Pearson correlation coefficient was used.

3. Results and discussion

Though the overall aim of the research was to determine the relationship between goal achievement orientation and perception of the motivational climate in distance and sprint student runners, lack of enough research in the area of
goal achievement orientation and perceived motivational atmosphere, the goal achievement orientation and motivational climate dimensions were compared at the first stage. The results showed that there is a significant difference between ego orientation and task achievement orientation of the distance and sprint runner students. No significant difference was observed between distance and sprint runner students in the mastery and performance perceived motivational climate. Results of the previous studies show that there is difference between sprint and power runners regarding goal orientation (ego orientation and task orientation). So, the results of this study do not support finding of Roberts and Amundsen (1996) and Mcmanus (2004). The reason for this contrast can be can be traced in the guiding behaviors of trainers in different researches. Before this, Goudas et al. (1995) in their study on 24 female participants in a running course, has studied the way different aspects of motivational climate and training method affect goal achievement orientation and has reported that the goal achievement orientation of the runners is affected by the motivational climate resulted from expectations and behaviour of the trainer. Researches in more controlled situations may result in a more accurate comprehension of these differences.

Comparison of ego orientation and task orientation of the student runners also did not show any significant difference between these two types of orientation in the distance and sprint runners. Previous researches have shown that distance runners are more task oriented and sprint runners are more ego oriented; despite this fact, no significant difference was observed between task orientation and ego orientation of distance and sprint runners. Comparison of the motivational climate perception in distance runners revealed that they perceive higher performance climate which supports the findings of previous researches. However, this comparison did not yield same results in sprint runners. Results of the research did not show any significant difference between the mastery and performance perceived motivational climates in the sprint student runners. This finding has practical implications for adjusting motivational behaviours of running trainers.

According to the main purpose of the research in studying the relationship among the variables of the research in the participants, there is a positive and significant relationship between task orientation and performance perceived motivational climate. In the previous studies high task orientation in the distance runners predicted their perception of performance motivational climate. But the present research shows that high ego orientation of the distance student runners was related to the high level of performance motivational climate perception. Perhaps the competitive atmosphere has forced the participants to become more ego oriented (similar to Williams (1998)). The relationship between other variables in distance runners was not statistically significant.

On the other hand, there was significant and positive relationship in the sprint student runners between goal achievement orientation aspects, i.e. ego orientation and task orientation, and ego orientation and performance perceived motivational climate. These findings show that sprint runners in their orientation for success care for both task and their excellence. Before this, sprint runners were believed to have high ego orientation and high perception of mastery motivational climate which are in contrast with this research. However, according to the resulted correlation coefficient for the significant relationship among the variables of this research we cannot be sure about the reasons for the results of this research with the previous researches. The resulted correlation coefficient indicates an average relationship which can be resulted from not separating different sexes in the study. Having contradictions in the findings, Duda and Horn (1993), previous studies introduce women as more task oriented and men as more ego oriented (Duda, 1989; Duda et al., 1995; Li et al., 1996). There are other variables which can be considered among the limitations of the research. For example, Williams (1998) reported that there is a significant relationship between goal achievement orientation of athletes and the time intervals of the competitions season. This positive relationship ranges from 0.64 at the beginning of the season to the 0.77 at the end. It is possible that observations in different time intervals resulted in the inconsistencies in the results of the research. Future researches can gain clearer comprehension by controlling these variables. According to what observed in this research, it is proposed that the future researches study the effect of different competitive levels, gender, and age in goal achievement orientation and perceived motivational climate. Study of the mediating role of the emotional and personality variables in the relationship between goal achievement orientation and the perceived motivational atmosphere, also will play a significant role in the clarification of this matter. It is noticeable that, nowadays, the role of orienting and motivating in improving athletic performance is already well proved and the research on the champions shows their high motivation and orientation (Maison, 2002; Wang et al., 2003). Therefore, it is recommended to the athletic trainers to adjust environmental variables.
References


Williams, L. (1998). Contextual influences and goal perspectives among female youth sport participants