



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



A study on the difference between emotion regulation amongst team and individual sports male athletes

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Abstract

The emotion regulation of team and individual sport athletes was assessed using the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire developed by Gross, J.J., & John, O.P. (2003), the emotion regulation questionnaire consists of subscales – expressive suppression and cognitive reappraisal. After the acquisition of the data, statistical technique independent sample T-test was administered to find out the significance difference between the two groups and Shapiro Wilk test was used to assess the degree of normality amongst the data. The results depicted nonsignificant differences in emotion regulation among male individual and team sports athletes.

Keywords: Emotion Regulation; Emotional Regulation; Expressive Suppression; Cognitive Reappraisal.

1. Introduction

The modern world is even more dynamic and proves to demand more from the human race which may exhaust the capability of individuals to cope with the situations and sometimes even adversities faced by them. The modern era has also brought a great amount of change and evolution to the world of sports at a continuous and a rigorous pace which makes it important for the athlete to be as mentally ready as they are physically and strategically and to facilitate that it is necessary for an athlete to be able to regulate their emotions and feelings in a rational manner, being able to control one's emotions according to the situation at hand and behave accordingly, and as well as acting upon the emotions or feelings when it's appropriate to do so.

'Emotional regulation refers to the process by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express their feelings. Emotional regulation can be automatic or controlled, conscious or unconscious, and may have effects at one or more points in the emotion producing process.' (Gross, 1998, p. 275).

There are various instances in an athlete's life when he/she faces adverse or extreme situations, such situations influence negative emotions and feelings which further lead to an imbalance in their mental equilibrium if not dealt with in an appropriate manner.

The concept of Emotional regulation consists of 3 main components:

- Behaviour and actions initiated by triggered emotions and feelings,
- Restraining behaviours and actions which are triggered under situations regarding emotions and feelings,
- Modification of behaviours and actions portrayed under the situation such as triggered emotions and feelings.

The third dimension is the most beneficial way to get the most out of regulatory procedures.

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A well-balanced human would have a greater sense of his/her mental equilibrium and be aware of his feelings and behaviour. Emotional management enables one to make informed decisions on which effective consequences to pursue and which to not. When one is confronted with a provoking threat, our brain's automatic instinct is to stimulate the amygdala, a brain structure that controls our fight-or-flight reactions. Emotional management pathways enable us to buy time before acting on the fight-or-flight stimuli. The longer interval between stimuli and response helps to recover mental faculties including thought and logical thought. Consequently, we will be able to avoid mental breakdowns or burnout.

Value engagement is a component of emotional control. When we respond rashly without paying attention to what is going on internally, we are more likely to deviate from our core beliefs and behave in ways that are antithetical to them. We learn the ability to remain cool under pressure and avoid behaving against our basic principles and ethics through careful regulation and self-control.

Gross and John (2003) model of emotional regulation has been referred to in this study which lays emphasis on two distinctive ways an athlete can regulate their emotions,

- Cognitive Reappraisal (CR) and
- Expressive Suppression (ES),

The model of Emotional Regulation proposed by Gross and John, 2003 suggested that an individual has 2 tendencies to regulate their emotions in 2 distinctive ways,

- **Cognitive Reappraisal:** *“the attempt to reinterpret an emotion-eliciting situation in away that alters its meaning and changes its emotional impact”* (Lazarus and Alfert, 1964; Gross and John, 2003)
- **Expressive suppression:** *“the attempt to hide, inhibit or reduce ongoing emotion- expressive behaviour”* (Gross and Levenson, 1993; Gross and John, 2003).

Emotional regulation is a component of psychological wellbeing, an athlete who has a well-developed self-emotional regulation displays socially accepted behaviours at all times, be it when they face losses, be it when they achieve greatness or be it when they defeat their rivals. An athlete who is high on the component of emotion regulation has the tendency to be sensitive to their and other's emotions, tend to behave in manners which are comforting to others around them, this very factor plays a very important role when an athlete is a part of a team sport. There are prominent studies which depict a significant positive relation between one's mental toughness and influence on their emotion regulation.

1.1. Aim of the study

To find out the difference in emotion regulation amongst individual and team sports athletes.

2. Materials and Methods

To conduct the current study a total number of 80 athletes (40 team sport athletes and 40 individual sport athletes) were purposively selected. All the athletes selected had at least represented their respective states or higher-level participation in their respective sport. All the athletes considered for the sample of the study aged from 18 to 30 years old. All the 80 athletes selected are males. The subjects were asked to fill the emotion regulation questionnaire, the ERQ is a questionnaire of emotional regulation which was developed by Gross and John (2003) and it is a self-reporting questionnaire consisting of 10 items designed to measure an athlete's ability to regulate their emotions in two ways, namely cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. Respondents were asked to answer each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The internal consistency of subscale cognitive reappraisal is .89-.90 and that of subscale expressive suppression is .76-.80, Cognitive reappraisal scores have shown negative correlation with psychological distress proving construct related validity of the questionnaire. Subscales Cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression have a set number of items assigned to them which are as follows,

- **Cognitive Reappraisal** - Q1, Q3, Q5, Q7, Q8, and Q10.
- **Expressive Suppression** - Q2, Q4, Q6, and Q9.

2.1. Statistical Procedure

Post collection of the data from the subjects, student's T-test was applied on the data acquired from both groups using IBM SPSS 27 statistics software, with the level of confidence selected as 95%. Test of Normality i.e., Shapiro-Wilk test of

normality was used to test the normality and the distribution of coefficients of both groups. Descriptive statistics was used to measure the skewness and kurtosis within the data acquired for the study.

3. Results and Discussions

Variables	TEAM SPORT ATHLETES		INDIVIDUAL SPORT ATHLETES		t (80)	p	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Cognitive reappraisal	32.3	6.14	33.0	5.08	-0.57	0.56	0.12
Expressive suppression	20.3	4.69	19.6	5.35	0.62	0.53	0.13

Figure 1 Descriptive statistics of the results of cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression among team and individual sports athletes.

On assessing the **cognitive reappraisal** among team sport athletes (M=32.3, SD=6.14) and individual sport athletes (M=33.0, SD=5.08) it was found that there was insignificant difference between the groups $t(80) = -0.57$, $p=0.56$, Cohen's $d=0.12$).

There was no significant difference between the team sport athletes (M=20.3, SD=4.69) and individual sport athletes (M=19.6, SD=5.35) on the assessment of **expressive suppression** $t(80) = 0.62$, $p=0.53$, Cohen's $d=0.13$).

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Cognitive reappraisal	.966	78	.031
Expressive Suppression	.978	78	.174

Figure 2 Test of normality of team and individual sport athletes.

On testing the normality of the data, it was found that the data attained associated to subscale cognitive reappraisal ($p=.031 < 0.05$) was not normally distributed. Whereas the data acquired associated to expressive suppression ($p=.174 > 0.05$) was found to be normally distributed.

The study encompasses two variables of emotion regulation namely, expression suppression and cognitive reappraisal. The findings of the study depict that there is no such difference between cognitive reappraisal ($p=0.567$) and expressive suppression ($p=0.535$) among individual and team sports athletes. The results suggest that an individual athlete has somewhat the same level of emotion regulation as compared to a team sport athlete and vice-versa which formulates an understanding for future development of interventions, programmes, exercises, studies, research, etc. encompassing the difference in the levels, perception, ability of emotion regulation between team and individual sport athletes. Findings suggest that future researchers could assume that there is no significant difference in the level of emotion regulation between individual and team sport athletes. However, the difference is not recorded and analysed according to any sport or game thus, further studies could bridge the gap between the shores of the unknown.

Abbreviations

- ER: emotion regulation,
- CR: cognitive reappraisal,
- ES: expressive suppression.

4. Conclusion

There was no significant difference found in the emotion regulation between male athletes of both individual and team sports and games. Both groups were found to possess almost an equal level of innate ability to regulate one's own emotions rationally.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The Author declares no conflict of interest.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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Author's short Profile



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