

Involvement of Mental Toughness of Players in Sports Performance Having Poor Sports Facilities and Uncertified Coaches

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Abstract

The present study explored the role of the mental toughness of players in their sports performance who train under poor facilities and uncertified coaches. Utilizing a quantitative approach, the research obtained quantitative data from 200 players belonging to clubs and universities of Faisalabad across various sports and competition levels. The findings revealed that players in suboptimal training environments exhibited moderate to high levels of mental toughness which positively and significantly correlated with their sports performance. Resilience and focus emerged as the most significant predictors of sports performance particularly in individual sports and at higher levels of competition. The results suggested that mental toughness is a key factor in athletic success in resource-limited settings and underscored the need to develop psychological attributes. The findings concluded with detailed recommendations for coaches, sports psychologists, and policymakers on effective strategies for enhancing mental toughness, aiming to provide vital support for players facing challenges in resource-limited training environments.

Keywords: Mental Toughness, Sports Performance, Poor Facilities, Uncertified Coaches, Player Resilience

Introduction

Mental toughness is increasingly recognized as a crucial factor in athletic performance particularly in environments with limited resources (Jones, Hanton, & Connaughton, 2007). Mental toughness involves various attributes including resilience, confidence, and the ability to maintain focus and determination in the face of adversity (Clough et al., 2002). These attributes are particularly vital for players who must contend with poor facilities and uncertified coaching conditions that can significantly hinder their physical and technical development. Mentally tough players tend to exhibit higher levels of performance consistency,

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particularly in high-pressure situations (Gucciardi, Hanton, Gordon, Mallett, & Temby, 2015). This ability to perform under pressure is critical for players who train in suboptimal conditions where the lack of access to quality facilities and expert coaching can degrade the psychological and physical demands of the sport.

Despite these challenges, many players in resource-poor environments manage to achieve significant success. This paradox suggests that mental toughness may play a compensatory role enabling players to overcome the limitations of their environment. Recent evidence supports this notion indicating that players with higher levels of mental toughness are better equipped to adapt to and thrive in challenging environments (Cowden, 2017a). Moreover, the improvement of mental toughness in such contexts may be facilitated by the very adversity that players face as repeated exposure to challenging conditions can foster resilience and psychological growth (Nicholls et al., 2020).

Players who train in environments characterized by inadequate facilities and uncertified coaches face significant challenges that can impede their sports performance. The absence of high-quality resources and professional guidance often leads to suboptimal training conditions which can hinder physical and technical development (Bell et al., 2020). Despite these obstacles, some players still manage to perform at high levels suggesting that other factors such as mental toughness may play a central role in their success.

Mental toughness has been identified as a key psychological attribute that contributes to athletic performance (Gucciardi et al., 2021). However, there is less research on how mental toughness interacts with environmental factors like poor facilities and uncertified coaching. Specifically, it is unclear to what extent mental toughness can compensate for the deficits associated with inadequate training conditions and how this compensation might vary across different sports and levels of competition.

This problem is particularly pressing in low-resource settings where players often lack access to certified coaches and modern facilities. These conditions can worsen the psychological and physical demands of sport potentially leading to burnout, injury, or underperformance (Wagstaff, 2022). Therefore, understanding the role of mental toughness in such contexts is essential for developing effective interventions that can enhance players' performance despite environmental limitations.

Given the growing recognition of mental toughness as a determinant of success in sports, it is crucial to investigate its specific influence on players who are disadvantaged by poor facilities and uncertified coaching. This research aims to address this gap by examining the link between the mental toughness of players and sports performance in these challenging environments using recent empirical

evidence to explore how players can overcome the constraints imposed by their training conditions.

Objectives of the Research

The central objective of the current research was to explore the role of mental toughness in influencing the sports performance of players who train in environments with poor facilities and uncertified coaches. Specifically, the research targets to achieve the objectives mentioned below:

- i. To assess the level of mental toughness among athletes training in environments with poor facilities and uncertified coaches.
- ii. To examine the relationship between mental toughness and sports performance in athletes with inadequate training resources.
- iii. To identify the specific mental toughness attributes that are most influential in mitigating the negative effects of poor facilities and uncertified coaching on sports performance.
- iv. To explore potential differences in the role of mental toughness across different sports and levels of competition.

Research Questions

The present research proposes the following research questions to answer the targeted objectives:

- RQ1: What is the level of mental toughness among athletes who train in environments with poor facilities and uncertified coaches?**
- RQ2: What does mental toughness relate to the sports performance of athletes with inadequate training resources?**
- RQ3: What specific attributes of mental toughness are most effective in mitigating the negative impacts of poor facilities and uncertified coaching on sports performance?**
- RQ4: Are there differences in the influence of mental toughness on sports performance across various sports and levels of competition?**

Research Hypotheses

The study proposed the following hypotheses:

- Ha1: There is a positive association between mental toughness and sports performance in athletes training under poor facilities and uncertified coaching.
- Ha2: Mental toughness such as resilience and focus will have a stronger influence on sports performance in resource-limited environments than in well-resourced.

Ha3: The influence of mental toughness on sports performance will vary across different sports and levels of competition, with some sports showing a stronger relationship than others.

Research Methodology

This research utilized the cross-sectional research design. The quantitative components involved the use of standardized questionnaires to measure levels of mental toughness and assess sports performance.

The target population for this study was those players who train in environments with poor facilities and uncertified coaches. The samples were selected from various sports disciplines and different levels of competition including club and university players. A simple random sampling technique was used to ensure representation across different sports and competition levels. The anticipated sample size was approximately 200 players.

Mental toughness was measured using the *Mental Toughness Questionnaire-48 (MTQ48)*, a widely used and validated instrument that assesses various dimensions of mental toughness (Clough et al., 2002). Sports performance was evaluated using performance metrics specific to each sport such as win-loss records, individual statistics, and coach evaluations.

At initial, the collected data was edited in SPSS, v-26. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize the levels of mental toughness among the participants through mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistics such as Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis were engaged. ANOVA was used to explore differences across different sports and levels of competition influencing mental toughness.

Findings

The findings of the existing study on the involvement of mental toughness in the sports performance of players' training under poor facilities and uncertified coaches are presented below. The results are based on both quantitative data collected from the participants.

The quantitative analysis revealed that players training under poor facilities and uncertified coaches exhibited moderate to high levels of mental toughness with an average score of 70 on the *MTQ48* which ranges from 48 to 120 as displayed in Table 1. The findings suggested that despite the challenging conditions, many players have developed a significant degree of psychological resilience.

Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics for Mental Toughness Scores*

Statistic	Value
Mean	70.20
Standard Deviation	8.50

The Pearson correlation coefficient indicated a positive and significant relationship between mental toughness and sports performance ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$) as mentioned in Table 2. This finding revealed that higher levels of mental toughness are linked with better sports performance even in the face of inadequate training resources.

Table 2: Correlation between Mental Toughness and Sports Performance

Variable	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value
Mental Toughness	0.48	< 0.01

Multiple regression analysis mentioned resilience ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$) and focus ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.05$) as the most significant predictor of sports performance among the mental toughness attributes as expressed in Table 3. These attributes were found to play a crucial role in enabling players to perform well despite the challenges posed by poor facilities and uncertified coaching.

Table 3: Regression Analysis of Mental Toughness Attributes on Sports Performance

Attribute	Beta (β)	Standard Error	p-value
Resilience	0.35	0.08	< 0.01
Focus	0.27	0.07	< 0.05
Confidence	0.14	0.09	0.12
Motivation	0.18	0.08	0.09

ANOVA results indicated significant differences in the influence of mental toughness on sports performance across different sports [$F(2,197)=4.52$, $p < 0.01$]. Mentally tough players in individual sports (track and field, badminton) showed a stronger correlation with performance compared to those in team sports (soccer, basketball, and hockey). Additionally, players at higher levels of competition (professional level) exhibited a stronger relationship between mental toughness and performance [$F(2,197)=5.10$, $p < 0.01$] than those at lower levels as displayed in Table 4.

Table 4: ANOVA Results for Differences in Mental Toughness Influence across Sports

Factor	F-value	p-value
Sport Type	4.52	< 0.01
Competition Level	5.10	< 0.01

Discussion of the Findings

The findings provided a significant understanding of the role of mental toughness in enhancing sports performance among players who train under poor facilities and uncertified coaches. This discussion contextualizes the results in relation to existing literature, interprets the implications of these findings, and suggests directions for future research.

The results revealed that players training under suboptimal conditions tend to exhibit moderate to high levels of mental toughness. The findings align with the literature suggesting that challenging environments can foster psychological resilience (Guszkowska & Wójcik, 2021). The adversity faced by these players including inadequate facilities and lack of professional coaching may act as a catalyst for developing mental toughness. The concept of adversity-driven growth posits that individuals who are regularly exposed to difficult conditions often develop stronger coping mechanisms (Nicholls, Polman, Levy, & Backhouse, 2008). Thus, the high levels of mental toughness observed may be a response to the persistent challenges these players encounter.

The positive and significant correlation between mental toughness and sports performance ($r = 0.48$) underscores the importance of psychological resilience in overcoming environmental constraints. This finding is consistent with prior research indicating that mentally tough players are better equipped to maintain high levels of performance, especially under pressure (Gucciardi et al., 2015). In environments with poor facilities and uncertified coaches where physical and technical preparation might be compromised, mental toughness could serve as a crucial compensatory factor. This relationship revealed that mental toughness enables players to focus, persist, and perform despite the lack of optimal conditions.

The regression analysis highlighted resilience and focus as the most significant predictors of sports performance among players in challenging environments. Resilience, the ability to bounce back from setbacks, and focus, the ability to maintain concentration under pressure, are crucial in contexts where players must continually adapt to and overcome deficiencies in their training conditions. These findings resonated with the work of Cowden (2017b) who identified resilience as a core component of mental toughness that is particularly vital in sports. The emphasis on focus also aligns with the understanding that maintaining concentration is critical in competitive settings especially when external support is limited.

The study findings found significant variations in the influence of mental toughness on sports performance across different sports and levels of competition. Mentally tough players in individual sports showed a stronger

relationship with performance than those in team sports. This might be due to the solitary nature of individual sports where players rely heavily on their internal resources including mental toughness to succeed (Hardy, Bell, & Beattie, 2014). In team sports, performance is often distributed across the group potentially diluting the impact of any single player's mental toughness. Furthermore, players at higher levels of competition exhibited a stronger correlation between mental toughness and performance which suggested that as the level of competition increases so does the importance of psychological resilience. This finding supported the notion that at elite levels where physical abilities are often comparable, mental toughness can be a differentiating factor (Jones et al., 2007).

Conclusion

The present research demonstrated that mental toughness plays a critical role in the sports performance of players training under poor facilities and uncertified coaches. Resilience and focus, in particular, are key attributes that enable players to overcome environmental challenges and perform at high levels. These findings contributed to the growing body of literature on mental toughness and underscored the importance of psychological resilience in sports especially in resource-limited settings.

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