The Influence of Positive Self-Talk on Overcoming Fear of Failure in Male Hockey Players

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
Research Paper **Keywords:** *Self-talk, Fear of failure, Hockey players, Questionnaire*	Even though athlete self-talk is ubiquitous and a good indicator of players' motivation, experiences, and performance, it can be difficult to assess effectively during competition because sport is dynamic. The current investigation was designed to evaluate the relationship between self-talk (ST) and athlete's fear of failure (FoF). For this purpose, 90 male hockey players participated of aged between 16 to 19 years (mean = 16.31 and SD = 1.81) from the Sports Authority of India (SAI). Both variable responses were collected through a questionnaire. The Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory PFAI (Short Form) [Conroy, 2001] was used to collect the data for fear of failure while the Automatic Self-Talk Questionnaire for Sports (ASTQS) [Amsel & Fichten 1998] was used to collect data for ST. The mean and standard deviation of FoF are -0.44 and 1.08 respectively and the mean and standard deviation for self-talk are 10.88 and 2.70 respectively. The normality of the data was checked using the Shapiro-Wilk test and after confirming the data, the parametric test was applied. The correlation was established using Pearson's Correlation, where study showed correlation at 0.01 level of significance. Thus, the result shows there

exist a negative correlation between self-talk and fear of failure in players which influences player performance.

INTRODUCTION

Performance in sports is influenced by a variety of psychological aspects that play crucial roles in an athlete's ability to succeed. Understanding and addressing these psychological components can significantly impact an athlete's performance. Fear of failure (FF), according to many successful performers, can either inspire them to achieve at a high level or keep them from realizing their full potential. A few psychological constructs and the FF construct share a unique intuitive attraction and meaning for both social scientists and laypeople studying behavior and social science (David E. Conroy). Fear of failure can lead to avoidance, stagnation, and procrastination. It holds an individual back in such a way that he fails to seek new experiences. Fear of failure (FF) is the tendency to avoid being incompetent due to the dread of the embarrassment and humiliation that one would experience if they fail. (Atkinson, 1957). The fear of failure is a common psychological challenge that many athletes face before competition. This fear can be debilitating and can significantly impact an athlete's performance. Here are some key points to understand and address the fear of failure in sports before competition: a) Acknowledge and Accept: It's important for athletes to acknowledge that feeling fear of failure is natural and common. Accepting this fear as a normal part of the competitive experience can help reduce its intensity and its potential to affect performance, b) mind-set shift: Encourage athletes to shift their mind-set from a fear of failure to a focus on the process and their own performance. Emphasizing aspects within their control, such as effort, strategy, and execution, can redirect their focus away from the outcome, c) set realistic goals: Setting realistic and process-oriented goals can help alleviate the fear of failure. Cognitive techniques such as Self-talk (ST) can be used by athletes as the result of, or as a means of, influencing thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. As such, ST "refers to those automatic statements that are reflective of, and deliberate techniques (e.g., thought-stopping) athletes use to direct sports-related thinking" (J., 2002).

Self-talk plays a crucial role in sports performance as it directly impacts a mental state, confidence, focus, and overall performance. Here are some key points highlighting the significance of self-talk in sports: a) confidence: positive self-talk can enhance an athlete's confidence by fostering a belief in their abilities and potential for success. Confidence is essential in sports as it can determine an athlete's

performance under pressure, b) focus: self-talk can help athletes maintain focus and concentrate on the task at hand, c) motivation: self-talk can be a powerful tool to motivate athletes, especially during challenging times or when faced with setbacks, d)emotional regulation: self-talk can also assist athlete. Athletes do see sports as a means for showing their competence and skills however various authors claim that it also acts as a medium that reflects athletes' incompetence in front of their peers. This might explain the fear of failure (FF) experienced by athletes in highly competitive environments. However, FF is something that can be controlled by positive thinking about the challenge despite adversity and focusing on what can be controlled rather than what cannot. Arguably the best tool for this is self-talk. The present study focuses to establish relationship between the two psychological variable that is considered to effect competitive performance i.e. self-talk (ST) and fear of failure (FF).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Method: For the study descriptive correlational method was used. It was used to find out the relationship between Fear of Failure and Self-Talk in male hockey players.

Samples: for the present study 90 male hockey players participated of aged between 16 to 19 years (mean= 16.31 and SD= 1.81) from the Sports Authority of India (SAI).

Tools used for data collection: For measuring Fear of Failure, the Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory- Short form (PFAI) (Conroy, 2001b) was used. The short form of PFAI questionnaire consist only 5 items that measures general fear of failure based on 5-point likert scale (-2 to +2). To evaluate self- talk, Automatic Self-Talk Questionnaire for Sports (ASTQS) (Amsel & Fichten 1998) consisted positive and negative self-talk was used. The questionnaire consist of total 40 items that are arranged in total 8 factors (5 items in each). These 8 factors are equally divided into positive and negative self-talk.

Statistical Technique: to evaluate the relation between self-talk and fear of failure, the mean and standard deviation was computed with descriptive statistics. Pearson's correlation at 0.05 level of significance was applied to see the relation after checking the normality test (Shapiro-Wilk test)

RESULT:

TABLE 1

Descriptive Statistics of SELF-TALK and FEAR OF FAILURE

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
X= ST	10.88	2.70	90
Y= FF	-0.44	1.08	90

Table 1 represents the descriptive statistics of self-talk and fear of failure. The "X" represents SELF-TALK, and "Y" represents FEAR OF FAILURE. The mean and standard deviation for ST is 10.88 and 2.70 respectively while the mean and standard deviation for FoF is -0.44 and 1.08 respectively.

To check the normality of data, the Shapiro-Wilk test was used. The value for the normality test was 0.992 which showed the data is parametric and thus the Pearson's Correlation was applied to find the relation between the variables.

TABLE 2

Pearson's Correlation between ST and FoF

		ST	FoF
ST	Pearson Correlation	1	-.407**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	90	90
FoF	Pearson Correlation	-.407**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	90	90

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level of significance.

Table 2 represents a significantly negative correlation between the variable i.e. self-talk (ST) and fear of failure (FoF). The value obtained for Pearson's Correlation in the table is -0.407 which shows that variables correlate negatively with each other at 0.01 level of significance.

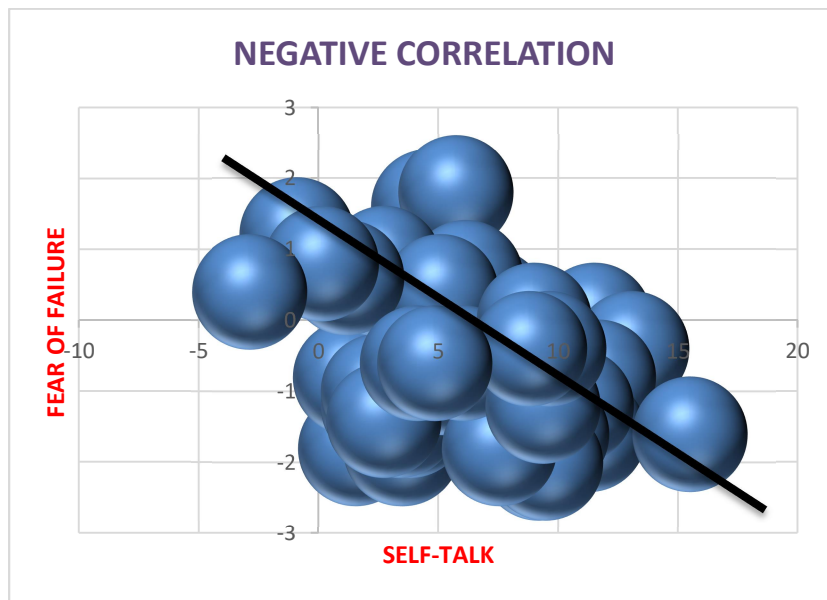The negative correlation between the two variable is depicted in figure 1.

NEGATIVE CORRELATION

FIGURE 1

Fig. 1 represents a negatively correlated scatter gram, where self-talk lies on the x-axis and fear of failure lies on the y-axis.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

The aim of the current investigation was to develop a relationship between two psychological variables self-talk and fear of failure. The result obtained can be summarised as: the responses obtained from the athletes helped us to classify the 8 factors of self-talk as the positive categories were psych up, confidence, instruction, and anxiety control while the negative categories were worry, disengagement, and somatic fatigue and the neutral category was irrelevant thoughts. Through tables and figures, it was observed that the two variable i.e. self-talk and fear of failure share a negative correlation. The value of correlation obtained in table 2 also makes it clear that fear of failure can not only be solved by talking with self either pre- or during the competition as it is not a perfectly negative correlation.. Findings from other studies suggest that coaches and athlete should inculcate the practice of self-talk in their daily sessions to get better results as self-talk strategies have been developed to direct and facilitate human performance (Hatzigeorgiadis, 2011). Findings also revealed that negative self-talk does not impede performance (Tod, 2011) and it even helped along with positive self-talk.

Based on several studies, it is found that there exists a significant negative correlation between self-talk and fear of failure. The more an athlete gets involve in the practice of self-talk, the less he fears resulting in the betterment of his performance.

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