

PERSONALITY PROFILE OF NIGERIAN MALE ATHLETES IN SELECTED SPORTS

J.B. VIPENE

Department of Educational Foundations,
Rivers State University of Science and Technology,
NIGERIA.

vipene.joseph@ust.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

The study utilized 4 sports namely: Basketball & Volleyball as team sports and Athletics (Track & Field) and Swimming as individual sports. All participants were males. Two personality inventories namely: Eysenck Personality Questionnaire and Sixteen Personality Factor questionnaire were employed in carrying out the study. A total of 96 male athletes and 24 male athletes were drawn as subject samples. The sample subjects were matched in age and educational qualifications. Utilizing mean, SD and t-test statistical techniques differences were found between athletes and non-athletes as well as team and individual sports athletes. Specifically significance differences occurred between athletes and non-athletes on 16 PF factor O, showing athletes to have strong sense of obligation and expectations of themselves. Significant differences also occurred between team and individual sports athletes on EPQ factor N indicating that team sports athletes were sociable and factor O of EPQ portraying individual sports athletes as having strong sense of obligation.

Keywords: Emotional stability, Aggressiveness, Outgoing, Self-controlled

INTRODUCTION

Certain fundamental psychological constructs such as mental health, mood state, personality, motivation, stress and other such factors will continue to dominant sport psychology and sports science research. Reason was that these are basic psychological requirements for optimal performance and sustained success in sports.

Of these psychological constructs personality is perhaps the most important because it is an enduring variable that distinguish one individual from another (Singer, 1988; Ikulayo, 1990).

Personality is defined by Maddi, (1976) as a set of characteristics and inner tendencies that determine those traits that are common and those that differ in behaviour (thoughts, feelings and emotions) of persons that have sort of continuity in time and that may not be easily understood in terms of the immediate situation alone.

A recent definition of personality by Pervin & Cervone, 2010 see personality as Psychological qualities that contribute to an individual's enduring and distinctive patterns of doing things.

Raglin (2001) said that there is evidence in literature that between 70 – 85% of successful and unsuccessful athletes can be identified using the general psychological measures of personality structure and mood state. Though no single psychological factor is sufficient for success in sports but personality seems to be a major determinant between success and failure in sports performance.

Evidence also abounds in literature that significant differences abound between athletes and non-athletes on personality factor. As Yazid, Vipene and Ojoko (2002) found that swimmers

and non-swimmers differed significantly on extraversion/introversion scale on the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire. Similarly, (Foster, 1977; O'Conner and Webb, 1976; Mohammed, 1981) used the Cattell 16PF in studying groups of male athletes and arrived at a general agreement that male athletes are more emotionally stable, aggressive, outgoing and self controlled than their non-athlete counterparts. Furthermore, Verma, (1990) utilized the Cattell 16PF in isolating differences between sportsmen and non-sports and found significant difference among them on 8 out of the 16 factors available on the test.

Morgan, (1980) observed that athletes from various subgroups possess different personality structures such as different psychic needs which should be handled in personalized ways. In similar vein, Hendry (1970) said, there are differences between team and individual sports members. Yazid (2009). Found significant between differences Taekwondo athletes and non-athletes on some personality factors on the Cattell 16 PF.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

A number of personality variables have been identified by various studies to be strongly associated with performance in sports as can be found in literature. Unfortunately such personality variables have not been identified for most sporting activities in Nigeria. The major objective for this study therefore is to provide empirical information about the personality profile of Nigerian male athletes in selected sports.

This information will assist coaches, trainers and sports psychologists to lay hands on information that will assist them in the scientific handling of Nigerian male athletes, since this aspect is actually lacking in training athletes in the country. This may be a probable reason for the dismal performances of Nigerian athletes in recent international sporting events especially the last Olympic Games held in London 2012. No Nigerian athlete won a single medal in any event. It therefore poses a real problem. Hence there is need to train them using scientific approach based on available data.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The following research questions were addressed in the study:

1. Are there differences in personality between male athletes and male non-athletes
2. Are there differences in personality between male athletes in team sports and those in individual sports

NULL HYPOTHESES

The following null-hypotheses were tested in the study:

1. There will be no significant difference in personality between male athletes and non-athletes
2. There will be no significance difference between male athletes in team sports and those in individual sports

METHOD/PROCEDURE

A total of 120 sample subjects were used for the study. They comprised 96 male athletes that were randomly selected from various states and national camps where athletes were involved in preparation for National and International competitions. While 24 male non-athletes were drawn from various locations in secondary schools and Universities in Nigeria. These non-athletes samples were used to serve as control. The age range of the subject sample was 16 – 28 years with a mean age of 22 years. The athletes and non-athletes were matched in age and educational qualifications. The sports involved in the study were Basketball and Volleyball as

team sports while Athletics (Track and Field) and Swimming were selected for the individual sports category. Outside football (soccer), Basketball and Volleyball are two popular team sports in the country as such they were selected for the study. On the other hand, athletics (track & field) is the most popular individual sports on the country. Swimming is also a sport that has followership; the country has presented swimmers in various Olympic Games as such the researcher thinks it necessary to involve these sports in the present study.

Instruments

The instruments used in carrying out the study were:

1. Biographical data questionnaire developed by the researcher containing 11 items which was mainly a personal data proforma intended to find out the sample subjects' educational qualifications, length of time the individual has been involved in competitive sports, level of participation, national or international etc.
2. Personality was assessed by using
 - a. Eysenck Personality Questionnaire developed by Eysenck and Eysenck (1975). It is a four scale instrument. The four scales are: P = Psychoticism, E = Extraversion/Introversion, N = Neuroticism and L = Lie. In the study, the 3 main scales of P.E.N, were utilized. In this study sample, reliability coefficients for the scales were P = 0.78, E = 0.75 and N = 0.74.
 - b. The Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire 16PF (Cattell, 1980). The instrument has 16 sub-scales as the name implies. The Factors have good reliability of coefficient in current study sample. The coefficient of reliability on the 16 Factors range from 0.71 – 0.80.

The two instruments have been found to be suitable for Nigerian subjects. For example, Eysenck Adelaja and Eysenck (1978) used the EPQ in a comparative study of Nigerian and English subjects. While (Sohi and Omotayo, 1990; Ukah, 1991) used the 16 PF in studies on Nigerian subjects. The instruments were administered on the subject samples by the researcher with the aid of two assistants.

Data Analysis

Data was analysed using the mean, standard deviation and the t-test statistical techniques.

RESULTS

Table 1. Mean scores and standard deviation of subjects on test scores of athletes of the various sports and non-athletes

Measures	Team Sports				Individual Sports				Male Non-Athletes		
	Male Basketball Players		Male Volleyball Player		Male Athletes		Male Swimmers		N	24	
	N	24	N	24	N	24	N	24			
\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
EPQ scales	P	7.46	4.26	5.42	3.32	6.13	3.08	5.04	3.58	5.01	3.05
	E	12.75	3.11	14.42	3.43	13.25	3.57	11.63	3.19	13.01	3.11
	N	10.96	3.00	10.25	3.93	10.17	2.96	8.17	3.06	9.13	2.80

(Continued.....)

Table 1. Mean scores and standard deviation of subjects on test scores of athletes of the various sports and non-athletes (.....continued)

Measures		Team Sports				Individual Sports				Male Non-Athletes	
		Male Basketball Players		Male Volleyball Player		Male Athletes		Male Swimmers		N	24
		N	24	N	24	N	24	N	24		
\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
16 PF	A	5.79	1.32	6.21	2.08	5.79	1.44	5.79	2.08	6.08	1.62
Scales	B	3.92	2.04	4.70	1.85	3.67	1.77	4.45	1.22	4.18	2.06
	C	5.08	1.71	5.42	1.78	4.67	1.60	4.59	1.20	4.70	1.84
	E	5.01	2.08	5.98	2.06	5.63	0.96	4.83	1.20	5.45	1.84
	F	3.96	1.20	3.62	1.38	4.33	0.96	3.21	1.50	3.82	1.38
	G	6.04	1.46	6.63	1.47	6.88	1.42	6.59	1.56	6.63	1.58
	H	5.71	1.40	6.04	1.30	5.79	1.18	5.58	1.56	5.58	1.67
	I	6.67	1.43	6.38	2.14	6.96	0.55	7.00	1.22	6.57	1.60
	L	5.96	1.83	6.75	1.42	6.58	1.91	6.33	1.88	6.82	1.92
	M	5.75	1.89	5.00	1.96	5.00	2.00	4.33	1.90	5.05	2.04
	N	6.96	1.92	6.33	2.18	6.08	1.79	7.08	1.56	7.43	2.18
	O	5.83	1.61	5.38	1.58	6.75	1.94	6.50	2.09	5.05	2.07
	Q1	5.21	1.91	5.54	1.44	5.96	1.83	4.92	1.79	5.56	1.71
	Q2	5.21	1.50	5.21	1.73	4.83	1.83	5.88	1.76	5.03	2.01
	Q3	5.63	1.55	6.04	1.57	5.29	1.39	6.21	2.08	6.01	1.68
	Q4	4.88	1.45	4.92	1.82	5.88	1.39	5.04	1.40	4.80	1.38

Results in table 1 shows that male athletes obtained higher mean scores on P-Psychoticism subscale or tough-mindedness than non-athletes. Basketball players been the most tough minded with a mean score of 7.00 and (SD 4.26). On E-Extraversion/Introversion subscale athletes generally were found to be more extroverted than non-athletes. Volleyball players been the most extraverted with a mean score of 14.2 (SD 3.43). On N-Neuroticism subscale athletes scored higher, basketball players scoring highest with a mean of 12.75 (SD.3.11).

On the other hand on the subscales of 16 PF athletes were found to obtain higher mean scores on the following sub-scales.

Factor B (Less intelligent vs More intelligent) Volleyball players obtained the highest mean score 4.70 (SD 1.95). They are probably the most intelligent among the groups study here.

Factor C (Affected by feeling vs emotionally stable) Basketball players scoring highest with mean of 5.98 SD (2.06). They are emotionally more stable than other groups.

Factor E (Humble vs Assertive) Basketball players obtained mean of 5.98 (SD. 2.06). These players show aggression by the result obtained.

Factor F (Sober vs Happy – Go – Lucky) Athletics (track & field) scored highest with a mean of 4.33 (SD 0.96). Track & Field Athletes seem to be most enthusiastic of the groups.

Factor G (Expedient vs Consciencious) Athletics (track & field scoring scored highest with mean of 6.88 (SD.1.42). They show more perserverance than other groups as revealed by the study.

Factor H (Shy vs Venturesome). Volleyball players scored a mean of 6.04 (SD 1.30). Volleyball players by this result are probably the most socially bold.

Factor I (Tough-minded vs Tender-minded) Swimming scored the highest with mean of 7.00 (SD 1.22). They appear the most sensitive of the groups.

Factor O (Self-assured vs Apprehensive) Athletics (track and field) also obtained the highest mean score 6.75 (SD 1.94). They are found in this study to be worrying among the groups.

Factor Q₂ (Group-dependent vs Self-sufficient) Swimmers had the highest mean score of 5.88 (SD 1.76). They are found to be liberal.

Factor Q₄ (Relaxed vs Tense) Athletics (track and field) also obtained the highest mean score of 5.88 (SD 1.39). A bit restless based on the mean score.

On the other hand non-athletes had higher scores than athletes on the following subscales:

Factor A (Reserved vs Outgoing). They obtained a mean score of 6.08 (SD 1.62). They tend to be outgoing.

Factor L (Trusting vs Imaginative). They scored 6.82 (SD 1.92). Hard to be fooled.

Factor M (Practical vs Imaginative). They obtained a mean score of 5.05 (SD 2.04). Absent minded.

Factor N (Forthright vs Astute). They scored a mean of 7.43 (SD 2.18). There are probably most Insightful of the groups.

Factor Q₁ (Conservative vs Experimenting). They obtained a mean of 5.6 (SD 1.71). They are liberal as indicated by the result of this study.

Factor Q₃ (Undisciplined Self Conflict vs Controlled) They obtained a mean score of 6.01 (SD 1.68). They have positive self image.

Table 2. Summary of t-test table comparing mean scores of athletes and non-athletes

	<i>Athletes</i>		<i>Non-athletes</i>		<i>t</i>
	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	
P	6.01	3.56	5.01	3.05	1.40
E	13.01	3.33	13.01	3.11	0.00
N	9.89	3.24	9.13	2.80	1.73
A	5.90	1.73	6.08	1.62	0.49
B	4.19	2.24	4.18	2.06	0.02
C	5.12	1.57	4.70	1.84	1.02
E	5.36	1.58	5.45	1.84	0.22
F	3.78	1.26	3.82	1.36	0.13
G	6.54	1.48	6.63	1.58	0.26

(Continued)

Table 2. Summary of t-test table comparing mean scores of athletes and non-athletes

(...continued)

	<i>Athletes</i>		<i>Non-athletes</i>		<i>t</i>
	<i>N = 96</i>		<i>N = 24</i>		
	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	
H	5.78	1.37	5.58	1.67	0.54
I	6.01	1.34	6.57	1.60	1.56
L	6.41	1.76	6.82	1.92	0.98
M	5.02	1.94	5.05	2.04	0.50
N	6.61	1.86	7.43	2.81	1.67
O	6.12	1.81	5.05	2.07	2.33 *
Q ₁	5.41	1.74	5.56	1.71	0.38
Q ₂	5.28	1.71	5.03	2.01	0.57
Q ₃	5.79	1.65	6.01	1.68	0.56
Q ₄	5.18	1.52	4.80	1.38	1.06

* Significant, ($P < 0.05$), $df = 118$, t -crit. 2.06

Results in table 2 shows that athletes scored higher on P-Psychoticism subscale or tough-mindedness than non-athletes with a mean score of 6.01 and (SD 3.56).

On E-Extraversion/Introversion subscale showing athletes to be on this subscale with an equal mean score of 13.01 though with different SD scores of 3.33 for team sports and 3.11 for individual sport athletes.

On N-Neuroticism subscale athletes had a mean score of 9.89 and (SD 3.24). showing them to be more sociable than non-athletes.

On the subscales of 16 PF, the table shows that on Factor A (Reserved vs Outgoing) non-athletes score higher mean scales 6.08 (SD 1.62).

On Factor B (less intelligent vs more intelligent) Athletes scored higher with a mean of 4.19 (SD 2.24).

Factor C (Affected by feeling vs Emotionally stable) athletes scored higher than non-athletes with a mean score of 5.12 (SD 1.57).

Factor E (Humble vs Assertive) Non-athletes scored higher than athletes with a mean score of 5.45 (SD 1.84).

Factor F (Sober vs Happy-Go-Lucky) Non-athletes scored higher with a mean scores of 3.82 (SD 1.36).

Factor G (Expedient vx Conscientious) Non-athletes scored higher with a mean score of 6.63 (SD 1.58).

Factor H (Shy vs Venturesome). Athletes had higher mean score of 5.78 (SD 1.37).

Factor I (Touch-minded vs Tender-minded) Non-athletes scored higher with a mean score of 6.57 (SD 1.60).

Factor L (Trusting vs Imaginative) Non-athletes scored a higher mean of 6.82 (SD 1.92).

Factor M (Practical vs Imaginative) Athletes had higher mean scores of 5.38 (SD 1.93).

Factor N (Forthright vs Astute) Non-athletes scored higher mean of 7.43 (SD 2.81)

Factor O (Self-assured vs Apprehensive). On this factor significant difference occurred between athletes and non-athletes on this factor indicating that athletes have a strong sense of obligation and high expectations of themselves.

Factor Q₁ (Conservative vs Experimenting) Non-athletes had higher mean score of 5.56 (SD 1.71).

Factor Q₂ (Group dependent vs Self-sufficient) Athletes had higher mean score of 5.28 (SD 1.71).

Factor Q₃ (Undiscipline Self Conflict vs Controlled) Non-athletes scored higher mean of 6.01 (SD 1.68).

Factor Q₄ (Relaxed vs Tense) Athletes scored higher mean of 5.18 (SD 1.52).

Table 3. Summary of t-test table comparing mean scores of male athletes on team and individual sports

<i>Measures</i>	<i>Team sports</i>		<i>Individual sports</i>		<i>t</i>
	<i>N = 48</i>		<i>N = 48</i>		
	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	
EPQ Scales P	6.21	3.79	5.59	3.33	0.94
E	13.59	3.27	12.44	3.38	1.69
N	10.61	3.47	9.17	3.01	2.18 *
A	6.00	3.40	5.79	1.76	0.70
B	4.31	1.95	4.06	1.50	0.69
C	5.25	1.75	4.63	1.40	1.94
E	5.50	2.07	5.23	1.08	0.82
F	3.79	1.29	3.77	1.23	0.08
G	6.34	1.47	6.74	1.49	1.25
H	5.88	1.35	5.69	1.37	0.68
I	6.53	1.79	6.98	0.89	1.50
L	6.36	1.63	6.46	1.90	0.27
M	5.38	1.93	4.67	1.95	1.78
N	6.65	2.05	6.58	1.68	0.18
O	5.61	1.60	6.63	2.02	2.76 *
Q1	5.38	1.68	5.44	1.81	0.17
Q2	5.21	1.62	5.36	1.80	0.43
Q3	5.84	1.56	5.75	1.74	0.27
Q4	4.90	1.64	5.46	1.39	1.75

* Significant ($P < 0.05$), $DF = 94$, t -crit. 2.06

Results in table 3 shows that team sports athletes scored higher mean of 6.21 (SD 3.79) on P-Psychoticism subscale

On E-Extraversion/Introversion team sports scored higher with a mean score of 13.59 (SD 3.27)

On N-Neuroticism team sports athletes had higher mean score of 10.61 (SD 3.47). Significant difference between Team individual sports athletes showing team sports to be more sociable.

On the subscales of 16 PF in the table

Factor A (Reserved vs Outgoing) Team sports athletes scored higher mean of 6.00 (SD 3.40).

On Factor B (Less intelligent vs more intelligent) Team sports scored higher with a mean score of 4.31 (SD 1.95).

Factor C (Affected by feeling vs emotionally stable) Team sports athletes scored higher mean of 5.25 (SD 1.75).

Factor E (Humble vs Assertive) Team sports athletes scored higher mean of 5.50 (SD 2.07).

Factor F (Sober vs Happy-Go-Lucky) Team sports athletes scored higher mean of 3.79 (SD 1.29).

Factor G (Expedient vs Conscientious) Individual sports athletes scored higher with a mean of 6.74 (SD 1.49).

Factor H (Shy vs Venturesome). Team sports athletes scored higher mean of 5.88 (SD 1.35).

Factor I (Touch-minded vs Tender-minded) Individual sports athletes scored higher with a mean score of 6.98 (SD 0.89).

Factor L (Trusting vs Imaginative) Individual sports athletes scored higher with a mean of 6.46 (SD 1.90).

Factor M (Practical vs Imaginative) Team sports athletes had higher meant of 5.38 (SD 1.93).

Factor N (Forthright vs Astute) Team sports athletes had higher meant of 6.65 (SD 2.05)

Factor O (Self-assured vs Apprehensive) Individual sports athletes scored higher with a mean of 6.63 (SD 2.02). Significant difference occurred between team and individual sports athletes on this subscale. Portraying team sports athletes to be self assured and confident.

Factor Q₁ (Conservative vs Experimenting) Individual sports athletes scored higher mean of 5.44 (SD 1.81).

Factor Q₂ (Group dependent vs Self-sufficient) Individual sports athletes scored higher with a mean score of 5.36 (SD 1.80).

Factor Q₃ (Undiscipline Self Conflict vs Controlled) Team sports athletes scored higher mean of 5.84 (SD 1.56).

Factor Q₄ (Relaxed vs Tense) Team sports athletes scored higher mean of 4.90 (SD 1.64).

DISCUSSION

The study established that differences exist between athletes and non-athletes on some factors. Though not significant as can be observed in the result obtained on table 1. However, significant difference was found between athletes and non-athletes on factor 0 of the 16 PF as can be obtained on table 2. The result showed that athletes are very confident, and stable. This finding is in agreement with Foster, 1977; O'Connor and Webb, 1976 & Mohammed, (1981) who similarly found athletes to be stable and self-controlled.

Significant differences were found between team and individual sports athletes on 2 factors. On the EPQ scale team sports athletes were found to be more sociable than their individual sports counterpart. This may probably be due to the reason that co-operation among team mates is necessary for success in team sports.

CONCLUSION

This researcher is of the opinion that if results of studies are scientifically used in training Nigerian athletes especially personality studies like this; there is likely going to be improvement in the performances of Nigerian athletes in international competitions.

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