

The Relationship between Personality Trait and Sport Performance: The Case of National League Football Clubs in Jimma Town, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The present study is an endeavor to explore the relationship between personality trait and sport performance on Jimma town national league male football players. The population of the study consisted of all Jimma town National league male football players (N=47) and all coaches (N=4) in the 2007 E. C (2014/2015G.C) competition season. The study employed a Cross-sectional design. To the data analysis descriptive co-relational method was employed. Personality was assessed by using the NEO- Five Factor Inventory, and athlete's Sport performance was assessed by coach's rating. Besides, two different questionnaires, on personality trait and Sport performance were used to collect data. Descriptive Statistics were used for assessing the Mean, frequency & SD, a Pearson Product-Moment for correlation analysis and multiple regressions were used to analyze the data obtained. The findings on the personality dimensions and sport performance showed that the multiple regression analysis indicated that from among personality trait only Conscientiousness have positive significant correlation with sport performance ($r = .897, P < 0.01$). Besides, the result indicated that conscientiousness was the sole predictor of sport performance ($b = .566, t = 10.94, p < 0.01$).

Keywords: National league players, Personality trait and Sport performance,

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Sport psychology has long been making its impact in the field of every sport for many years. Many teams around the world have been utilizing mental techniques in the improvement of athletic performance. One of the aspects of the field is the determination of future performance through the possibility that elite athletes possess personality characteristics that make them successful in their particular sport (Lopez, & Santelices, 2011)

And also it has long been attributing successful athletic performance to their personality characteristics. Versari (2004) and Auweele, Cuvpert, Mele, & Rzewnicki, (1993) have concluded that there is a positive relationship between personality and some aspect of athletic performance. It was also thought that a person's answers on a questionnaire could be used to predict successful performance.

As Ministry of Sport of Ethiopia national sport policy, (1993) mentioned that, In Ethiopia, Modern sport has a history of over half a century in this country. Even if much type of games is introduced within this period, but the growth of modern sport is still at the lower level.

In the last century, sport and physical activity have earned a great importance in society. With this enhanced awareness, physical, technical and psychological improvements have become priority in sport teams with the intent of making the most of the athlete's potentiality. In this regard, the known sport sciences such as physiology, biochemistry, medicine, biomechanics, sociology and psychology have been improved, researched and applied in competitive sport (Gould & Weinberg, 2008).

Personalities characteristics are traits possessed by individuals and are commonly regarded as "properties of persons that dispose them to react in certain ways in given classes of situations (Anshel, 1997). These traits may define an individual's future reactions to situations as an athlete's personality predicts how he or she will perform in future situations. The assessment of such personality characteristics as samples of behaviors could be measured through the use of standardized psychological tools.

A consensus has emerged among trait theorists regarding a five-factor model of personality (McCrae, & Costa, 2003; Shrivastava1, Gopal, & Singh 2010). There are many personality tests in existence, but a commonly accepted empirical model in the social sciences is called the Big-Five, or equivalently the Five-Factor Model (FFM) (John, & Soto, 2007). (Piedmont, Hill, & Blanco, 1999) found that the five-factor model of personality could be used to make predictions about the player's performance in sports. The five-factor model of personality is a very useful tool in assessing individual differences (Singh, & Manoj, 2012).

Contemporary research uses the Big Five personality factor model (*Extraversion* (E), *Agreeableness* (A), *Conscientiousness* (C), *Neuroticism* (N), and *Openness* (O)) as a reliable and valid measurement for psychological characteristics (Cost & McCrae, 1992) based on the three main reasons. First, the five dimensions are rooted in biology (Jang, McCrae, Angleitner, Riemann, & Livesley 1998). Second, the dimensions are relatively stable throughout life (McCrae, & Costa, 2003), and third, the dimensions are found in several cultures (Benet, & John 2000).

The dimensions of big five model include *extroversion*, *agreeableness*, *conscientiousness*, *neuroticism*, and *openness* to experience (Robbins, & Judge 2008). These dimensions of personality are associated with different aspects of an individual's personality traits such as being assertive, emotional stability, and a person's tendency to experience distress.

The first of the big five, *extraversion*, deals with an individual's tendency toward being either *extraverted* or *introverted* and, therefore, whether a person is talkative, assertive, sociable, or not. The second dimension, *neuroticism*, reveals an individuals' emotional stability and their tendency to experience distress and to be able to effectively handle, emotionally, any such stressful situation. Anxiety, depression and worry are often associated with this dimension of personality. *Extraversion* and *neuroticism* are often referred to as the "big two."

The third is *conscientiousness*, which deals with an individual's will to achieve goals and their dependability. This dimension can also be used to describe a person as careful, responsible and thorough. The fourth of the big five is *agreeableness*. It describes a person's humanity, or, in other words, their emotional support or hostility, caring, and nurturance or a lack there of. Behaviorally, the fourth factor describes a person as being good-natured, courteous, soft-hearted, tolerant, or not.

The last of the big five is *openness*, or, more specifically, *openness* to experiences. This is related to an individual's creativity and divergent thinking. It also describes whether or not a person is open to new feelings and ideas, flexible, or willing to use their imagination (Singh, & Manoj 2012).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Sport psychology researchers have been interested in how athletes' psychological characteristics influence performance. From this point, it is clear that psychological characteristics differ between more and less effective athletes and teams. Moreover, the ability to mentally prepare is considered a key component of such differences (Anshel, 1997).

But, in the case of this study area (South western competition zone of the country) there is no research done. So this research tries to file this gap.

Adel M. *et al.*, (2013) on their research revealed that, athlete with high discipline, responsibility; achievement motivation and goal orientation (*conscientiousness*) have high performance in the game. But, athletes with *neuroticism* characteristics such as anxiety, depression, aggression, angry and selfishness have low emotional and behavioral stability. It causes players easily show their angry, aggression and failure and have been poor performance in the game.

Extraversion athletes, also, due to characteristics such as sensation seeking, risk taking, distractibility could not control their emotions. In this regard, these athletes to motivating oneself and feelings of pleasure and satisfy their curiosity, show emotional behaviors and it will be reduce their athletic performance. *Openness* to experience is characterized by flexibility, creativity, acceptance of other people's ideas, attitudes and rules.

The findings of this study indicate that there was not significant relationship between openness with athlete's performance.

In general, the purpose of this study was to explore the relationship of the big five personality traits and sport performance. And also "Personality trait as Predictor of Sports Performance in Jimma town National league male football players".

1.3 Research questions

The following specific questions will be answered on this research:

1. What is the personality trait profile of the Jimma town National league participant of Male Football players as measured by the NEO-FFI personality questionnaire?
2. Is there a positive or negative relationship between sport Performance and personality trait on Jimma town National league participant of Male Football players?

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Personality and sport performance

Personality can have a profound effect on the positive or negative experience of sports for sportspersons. Such effects can either help or hinder the player, depending on the emotion that the player chooses to express and the situation in which he or she choose to express that emotion. Sport and physical activity programs can provide an effective vehicle for youth to develop at a personal, social and emotional level. Such personality traits as perfectionism, anger, and over-competitiveness, however, also have the potential of influencing a young player's sense of self-concept (Apter, 1984).

Nowadays, numerous studies have evaluated the role of personality in sport and have found that measures of personality can differentiate athletes from non athletes. An early review by Cooper (1969) showed that athletes possessed a higher motivation to achieve as well as higher levels of social confidence and social

aggressiveness than non athletes. Garland and Barry (1990) noted similar findings with collegiate football teams. These differences in personality are not limited to just men. Renfrew and Bolton (1981) noted that female athletes had higher levels of *conscientiousness* and self-control than the normative group.

2.2 The science of personality

As cherry, (2013); Mojtaba, Fatemeh, & Fatemeh, (2013); has mentioned personality is made up the characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that make a person unique. It arises from within the individual and remains fairly consistent throughout life. He pointed out the theories of Personality that a number of different theories have emerged to explain different aspects of personality. Some theories focus on explaining how personality develops while others are concerned with individual differences in personality.

2.3 Big five dimensions of personality

First, the present researchers have mentioned five basic dimensions of personality which have proposed by personality researchers and often referred to as the "Big 5" personality traits.

As a matter of fact, evidence of research has been growing over the past 50 years, which started with the research of Fiske (1949) and then widespread by other researchers including (Norman, 1967; Goldberg, 1981; and McCrae & Costa, 1987).

Gosling, Rentfrow and Swann, (2003) discussed about the role big five personality traits that the Big-Five framework is a hierarchical model of personality traits with five broad factors, which represent personality at the broadest level of abstraction. Each bipolar factor (e.g., Extraversion vs. Introversion) summarizes several more specific facets (e.g., Sociability), which, in turn, subsume a large number of even more specific traits (e.g., talkative, outgoing). The Big-Five framework suggests that most individual differences in human personality can be classified into five broad, empirically derived domains.

Cherry; and Mojtaba (ibid) reviewed five categories which are usually described as follows:

- 1) **Extraversion:** This trait includes characteristics such as excitability, sociability, talkativeness, assertiveness and high amounts of emotional expressiveness.
- 2) **Agreeableness:** This personality dimension includes attributes such as trust, altruism, kindness, affection, and other behaviors.
- 3) **Conscientiousness:** Common features of this dimension include high levels of thoughtfulness, with good impulse control and goal-directed behaviors. Those high in conscientiousness tend to be organized and mindful of details.
- 4) **Neuroticism:** Individuals high in this trait tend to experience emotional instability, anxiety, moodiness, irritability, and sadness.
- 5) **Openness:** This trait features characteristics such as imagination and insight, and those high in this trait also tend to have a broad range of interests.

They noted that each of the five personality factors represents a range between two extremes. For example, extraversion represents a continuum between extreme extraversion and extreme introversion.

3. METHODS AND MATERIALS

3.1 Study design

Cross-sectional study design was used in order to collect data from the study subjects. The main objective of this study will be to investigate the impact of personality traits on sport performance and the relationship of personality traits and sport performance. To the data analysis descriptive co-relational method was employed.

3.2 Study area

The study were conducted in Jimma Town, which is located at south west from a capital city Addis Ababa with 346km long and in Oromia regional state. This Town has two national league participant clubs. But still the town does not have Premier league participant clubs.

3.3 Variables of the study

3.3.1 Independent variables

- Personality trait (Extraversion, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Openness)

3.3.2 Dependent Variables

- Performance-relevant dimensions (coach ability, athletic ability, game performance, team plainness and work ethics)

3.4 Sample and sampling technique

Jimma Aba Buna and Jimma Kenema Football Team were selected for two reasons; first, the Teams were the only National league team in the town. Second, the teams have had an experience in participating in the National

league levels. Hence, the selection was made purposefully.

There are 82 teams found in Ethiopia, which are participating in National league (*BEHERAWI* league) of the country. They are grouped according to their geographical locations under seven competition zones. Each competition zone has seven up to eleven teams. From this competition zone SWRE National league competition zone contains seven clubs. Aba Buna and Jimma Kenema football teams are one of this competition zones. They have 26 and 25 players respectively, or a total of 51 players.

3.5 Data collection instrument

3.5.1 Questionnaires

Self-report questionnaires were mainly used to collect quantitative data on Players' Personality trait and Sport performance. Questionnaires were divided into three parts. The first part contains background information about the players, and coaches. The Second part contains players' personality inventory (these items were adopted from International Personality Item Pool, 2001; Costa and McCrae's 1992). The third part contains Coach's rating questionnaires which are rated by the coaches to measure players sport performance; these items adopted from Piedmont, *et al*, 1999).

3.5.1.2 Background Questionnaire

Background Questionnaires was utilized to elicit essential information about the coaches and players: age, work and playing experience, player's position of the player, educational levels, and Nationality.

3.5.1.3 Personality questionnaires

Personality was assessed by using revised NEO personality inventory (NEO-PI-R), Costa and McCrae's (1992). The 50-item IPIP self-report measure assesses five personality dimensions (extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness). Participants were required to indicate, on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree).

In order to collect the relevant information from players, the researcher was used NEO-PI-R (50)

3.5.1.4 Coach's ratings

The other instrument was Coach's ratings (Piedmont, *et al*, 1999). Each player was rate by both the Head and Assistant coaches on 5 performance-relevant dimensions (coach ability, athletic ability, game performance, team plainness and work ethics). Ratings were based on 5-point Likert scale (excellent, above average, average, bellow average, poor). The coach's ratings on each dimension were average to enhance the reliability of each rating. The effective reliabilities of these averaged ratings ranged from 0.71 for coach ability to 0.82 for game performance (Rosenthal, & Rosnow 1984).

3.6. Data Collection Procedure

The data collection was conducted according to the following procedure. First, questionnaire (inventory) was adopted. Then, they were subjected to comments from colleagues and research advisors for reliability and validity. Following this, the clarity of the contents of the questionnaire was checked in the light of the objective of the study. The questionnaire items were translated into Amharic by professionals. After designing tools to collect data for the study, then a pilot study was carried out on 18 players, which were out of the study groups, but there was comparable to the sample groups (Wolkite Kenema national league Football clubs). The players were asked to fill in the questionnaire with 48 items on their use of personality inventory and the coaches were asked to fill 5 items to measure sport performance (performance-relevant dimension). The reliability coefficients of personality inventory were found 0.737. It was found to be in the range of 0.706 - 0.809 which shows high reliability.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedure

3.7.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

The data from the self-report questionnaires were organized and entered into computer to be analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) program and 95% of confidence level is considered. Accordingly, SPSS version 20 was used to compute the above descriptive statistics. Mean and frequency were used to analyze the background information of the male national league Football player of the study samples. Pearson product moment analysis was employed to indicate relationship between personality trait and sport performance. Step wise multiple regression analysis was applied to indicate if there were Personality factors (extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness) was the predictor of performance-relevant dimensions of athletes in the competition zone.

Similarly, the mean was used to interpret the average score of each personality questions as well as the overall mean score of all personality factors item pertaining to the level and types of personality trait, such interpretation procedure was based on Costa and McCrae's (1992).

3.8 PILOT STUDY

Before the actual study was carried out, a pilot study was conducted with 18 respondents who were not part of the sample group (who were Wolkite Kenema National league players). The purpose of the pilot study was to assess the reliability, validity and relevance of the questionnaires.

Out of 50 items of NEO personality questioners two of them were decided to remove. Because those questions were not concerned the study populations. The questions were:

1. I see myself as someone who is politically liberal!
2. I see myself as someone who is politically conservative!

After that the players were asked to fill in the questionnaire with 48 items on their use of personality inventory and the coaches were asked to fill 5 items on performance-relevant dimension. The reliability coefficients were found 0.737 to the NEO personality questioners it was found to be in the range of 0.706 - 0.809. And Cronbach's Alpha of the coaches rating questions was 0.82 which shows high reliability.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Initially letter of permission was taken from Jimma university Department of sport science and submitted to concerned body. Participation in the study is totally voluntarily and Researchers was explained the purpose of the study to every participant and obtain inform consent before beginning the questioner filling. Participants fill the questioners privately and all necessary precautions were taken to maintain the confidentiality during the information collection. And also cultures or traditional values of all the study population were taken into consideration

4. Results

Table 1: Correlation coefficient of personality traits and sport performance on Male National league Football players, in 2007 E.C, Jimma Town, Ethiopia.

N0	Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Neuroticism	20.1	3.70	1					
2	Extraversion	33.1	3.75	.064	1				
3	Openness	25.4	4.78	-.213	-.168	1			
4	Agreeableness	32.1	4.79	-.169	-.040	.170	1		
5	Conscientiousness	35.1	4.75	-.401**	.103	.121	.422**	1	
6	Overall performance	18.9	3.02	-.338*	.177	.104	.380**	.897**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
 * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.9 presents the inter-correlations between the Personality Factors (*Neuroticism*, *Extraversion*, *Openness*, *Agreeableness* and *Conscientiousness*) and Sport performance in male national league football players. It was empirically proved that sport performance was significantly positively correlated with *Conscientiousness* ($r = .897, P < 0.01$) and *Agreeableness* ($r = .380, P < 0.01$).

Moreover a correlation data revealed that *Openness* ($r = .104, P = .485$) and *Extraversion* ($r = .177, P = .233$) score had a weak positive relationship, but there was not statistically significant. Besides *Neuroticism* score had a weak negative relationship ($r = -.338, P < .05$). However, the relationships were negatively significantly correlated.

But as Singh and Singh (2013) they tried to show *neuroticism* had significant correlation with three levels participation (district, state and national level volleyball players) ($r = .34, P < 0.01$; $r = .46, P < 0.01$ & $r = .53, P < 0.01$) respectively. And also *extraversion* dimensions of personality have significant correlation with those three different levels of competition. Whereas, *agreeableness* has a positive significant relationship with state and national level volleyball players sport performer. But *conscientiousness* correlates significantly higher with the national level of participants. But in the current study, *conscientiousness* and *agreeableness* were had positively significant relationship with sport performance. Beside, *Neuroticism* had negatively significantly correlated with sport performance. So, it is not contradicting on the finding of Singh and Singh (2013)

Table 2: Multiple regression between personality traits and Sport performance on Male National league Football players, in 2007 E.C, Jimma Town, Ethiopia.

	R	R2	Adjusted R2	F (df)	NEO-FFI	B	Beta	T	Sig	Partial Correlation
Overall Performance	.901 ^a	.813	.790	35.55 (5,41)	Con	-3.89		-1.18	.244	
					N	.070	.087	1.25	.219	.192
					E	.014	.017	.232	.818	.036
					O	.009	.014	.20	.84	.031
					A	.005	.008	.106	.916	.017
					C	.566	.890	10.94	.000	.863

**P < 0.01, *P < 0.05

As can be seen, in table 4.10, in order to determine the strength of relationships between self-rated personality and sport performance, step-wise multiple regression analyses were conducted. The analysis used the coaches' ratings (sport performance) composite as the dependent variable and the personality dimensions as the predictors.

The above multiple regression analysis data revealed that *Conscientiousness* of the athletes personality trait and sport performance have a statistically significant relationship, ($r=.901$, $F(5, 41) = 35.55$, $p < 0.01$. 90.1 % of the variance in the overall performance score is explained for by the variance in *Conscientiousness* personality of the players. *Conscientiousness* was found to be as a statistically significant predictor of sport performance ($b= .566$, $t= 10.94$, $p < 0.01$).

The present study indicates that athlete with high *Conscientiousness* characteristics such as discipline; responsibility; achievement motivation and goal orientation have high performance in the game. These findings argued on research done in Iran, at Ardebil city, which is revealed that only *conscientiousness* have significant positive correlation with football and futsal players' Sport performance ($r = 0.18$, $P < 0.05$). And *Conscientiousness* was the sole predictor of performance (Adel M. *et al.*, 2013; Salgado 1997; Singh & Singh 2013).

But, athletes with *neuroticism* characteristics such as anxiety, depression, aggression, angry and selfishness have low emotional and behavioral stability. It causes players easily show their temper, aggression and failure and poor performance in the game as well as team cohesions and work ethics.

The findings with *neuroticism* are not consistent with previous research that found self-esteem; self-confidence and self-control were related to performance. In order to maintain a good sense of self under pressure, being able to tolerate stress and control impulsivity are all parts of low *neuroticism* (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of this study is to identify personality trait, describe the correlation of personality trait and sport Performance; and investigate whether the personality factors (E.A.C.N & O) are significant predictor of sport performance.

In the modern world, every nation is trying hard to produce sportsperson, who could bring glories in various competitions at international level. Such honors in sports have already acquired a high prestige-value for participating nations. It is natural; therefore, that improving the standards in the field of football sport has become a focal point of attention, study and effort on the part of physical educators, coaches and research workers almost in all countries of the world. In this effort, various disciplines like psychology, education, medicine, physical sciences etc. are getting more and more involved. So, this researcher is also trying to analyze the relationship between personality trait and sport performance in male national league football players in Jimma town.

The study has indicated that all national league football clubs does not have psychological staffs in their coaching staff. Therefore, in one or the other way it creates negative impact on the success of the effectiveness of the athletes, coaches and clubs. And the study revealed that there is a lake of training for the coaches updating the current knowledge. On the other hand more than half of the players do have less than two year playing experience on their teams.

According to coaches rating, the overall sport performance of the players showed that the maximum mean result were reported by work ethics ($M= 4.17$, $SD= .732$) and the minimum mean result were game performance and team plainness ($M= 3.64$, $SD= .870$ & $M= 3.64$, $SD= .845$) respectively.

Overall, the results of this study showed that the personality dimensions of *Conscientiousness* were significantly associated with athletic performance among male national league football players. These associations were found for coaches' ratings on several ability dimensions. Only *Conscientiousness* had a significant predictor of sport performance. The magnitude of this association is consistent with previous research done in Ardebil city (Iran) Adel M. *et al.*, (2013).

The other personality trait such as *openness*, *agreeableness*, *extraversion* and *neuroticism* were not significantly positively correlated with sport performance. And there was not significant positive predictor of sport performance (Kane, 1964; Piedmont *et al.* 1999; Salgado 1997; Aidman and Schofield, 2004; Singh & Singh 2013).

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions derived from the findings of the data analyzed, the following recommendations were made as possible ways of curbing the problems observed.

- Any training can be effective and successful if it is supported with appropriate facilities and equipments. For example, if any clubs do have a psychological staff it helps to develop team cohesion, facilitate an

excellent team spirit and the psychologists may facilitate imagery training for the teams. Therefore, top administrative officials or management staffs should give emphases to employ sport psychologist.

- As finding revealed that there was a problem on updating the coach's awareness (per year performance enhancing courses is very low). Therefore, it is recommended that, first; coaches should be updated through training with the current football world. Second, management staffs should have facilitating performance enhancing courses from the football Federation to the main and assistant coaches.
- As the result showed that there was only 2.1% of the study populations have greater than two years playing experience on their club. Therefore, it is recommended that the top administrative officials or management staffs, coaching staff, all concerned bodies should exert unreserved effort to create suitable environment to increase the playing experience of the player on their club.
- The present study show that players were found in Jimma town has an excellent amount of effort and commitment to the team, her and the coaches (work ethics). But the table 4.8 shows that the minimum mean score respectively (M=3.64, 3.64 & SD= .870, .845) were on player performs overall in the games (Game performance) and ability of player to get along

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