



COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF SUPERSTITIOUS BEHAVIOUR AMONG COLLEGIATE MALE STUDENTS BASED ON PARTICIPATION IN COMPETITIVE SPORTS

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to compare superstitious behaviour between sportspersons and non-sportsperson students enrolled in UG and PG program in colleges. The researcher decided to select 100 male intercollegiate sportspersons for this study. It was also decided to select 100 non-sportsperson college students. The age of the selected subjects was 18 to 25 years. Purposive sampling was used to select 200 subjects from various colleges operational in Chhattisgarh. The superstitious behaviour in the selected subjects was determined by a scale developed by Dubey and Dixit (2011). It consists of 40 statements and three alternatives are given for each statement. A scoring pattern of this scale suggests that a high score means more superstitious behaviour. The data were analysed with the help of an independent sample 't' test and it was observed that there was a statistically non-significant difference in superstitious behaviour of sportspersons and non-sportsperson college students. It was concluded that participation in sports is not a strong enough variable that influences the superstitious behaviour of male students enrolled in UG and PG programs in colleges.

Keywords: Superstitious behaviour, college students, participation in sports

1. INTRODUCTION

Every culture spread in different demographic areas has its superstitions. Superstitious beliefs are part of human life for ages. This behaviour is practiced in every culture and dates back to ancient times (**Jahoda, 1969**). **Vyse (2013)** opined that the superstitious behaviour gives a mental piece regarding an uncertain future that he will succeed by doing certain acts or rituals. According to **Vyse (2013)** superstitious behaviour originate from a belief that the outcome of an event can be controlled with some rituals or acts repeatedly. **Brevers et al. (2011)** felt that superstitious behaviour and beliefs create an illusion regarding control over the certain situation or achieving set goals. **Schippers and Van Lange (2006)** defined superstitious behaviour as those acts or rituals that are considered as a coping mechanism to control anxiety and tension for success in that particular work. So, it is obvious that superstition can not be defined through a certain definition. Superstition is considered irrational and **Skinner (1948)** thought that there was no relation between superstitious behaviour and the certainty of that event to occur in favour. Elaborating the superstitious behaviour, **Jahoda (1969)** propagated that it is more of irrational thinking and not involving the decision-making process. Some of the common superstitions are keeping the fingers crossed or touching the wood for better and safe outcomes (**Newport and Strausberg, 2001; Goodal, 2010**).

Although superstitious practices can be easily observed in day to day life, it is more commonly seen in the sporting field. These superstitious beliefs are often performed by athletes during a match (**Bleak and Frederick, 1998**). Before the start of a match, a player performs a certain physical movement or putting his left foot on the ground every time he steps in the playing arena can be considered as superstitious behaviour. Scientifically all these acts are considered irrational, athletes, coaches and even fans perform certain superstitious physical movements for favourable outcomes. The great Portuguese soccer player Ronaldo always enter the playing field by putting his right foot forward while tennis player Serena Willaims always tap the ball five times before serving. There are numerous examples such as famous Australian cricketer Steve Waugh keeping a red handkerchief as a lucky charm while playing. **According to Dan et al. (2011)**, superstitious behaviour is not associated with success in sports but it gives athletes a false illusion that things are under control. **Schippers and Van Lange (2006)** believes that superstitious acts, rituals or behaviour have nothing to do with the outcome of a sports event but it releases tension and acts as a facilitator in sports performance. The basic core of sports competition is the uncertainty of results (**Guttman, 1978**). Hence there is no surprise that an athlete may be superstitious because when two athletes of the same ability or two teams of the same skill sets compete, the results are always uncertain. Research under sports psychology scientifically suggest that due to tension and anxiety associated with competitive sport, superstitious acts take place (**Becker, 1975; Brevers et al., 2011; Schippers & Van Lang, 2006**). Apart from this researchers namely **Coffin, 1971; Gmelch, 2003; Gregory & Petrie, 1975, Wright and Erdal, 2008** have pointed some common superstitious behaviour. Sports psychologists such as **Roenigk (2010)** stated that superstitious behaviour act as a psychological placebo in the athletic community. Some athletes practice superstitious acts so have that extra psychological edge in the form of concentration, focus and coping with stress.

Just like any other part of this world, superstitious behaviour is common in India. The superstition about the beneficial effect of lemon chilli to avert evil force to witch-burning is widely practised in India. A study published in The Hindu Business line revealed that 61% of employees in India are superstitious. Generally carrying a luck charm, knocking or touching the wood, keeping the fingers crossed at the time of declaration of results or try not to walk under

the ladder are some of the commonly practised superstitions (Epstein, 1993, Wiseman and Watt, 2004, Keinan, 2002 Pole et al. 1974). In sports Ciborowski, 1997, Van Raaalte et al., 1997, Todd and Brown, 2003, Schippers and Van Lang, 2006) Brevers et al., 2011, Dömötör, 2016 and Katerina et al., 2017 have conducted extensive research on superstitious behaviour and pinpointed some of the variables such as type of sport, nature of the sport, strong opponent, locus of control, degree of difficulty in executing sports skill etc. Although considerable research has been conducted on superstitious behaviour, a comparison of superstitious behaviour between college students has not been conducted in the light of their participation in competitive sports. Hence the present study was planned.

The present study aimed to compare superstitious behaviour between sportspersons and non-sportsperson students enrolled in UG and PG program in colleges.

It was hypothesized that the superstitious behaviour among college students will vary significantly based on their participation in competitive sports.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Sample

To conduct the study 100 male intercollegiate sportspersons who participated in various team and individual sports events were selected from colleges operational in Chhattisgarh. To fulfil the objectives of the present study, 100 non-sportsperson college students enrolled in various UG and PG courses were also selected. The age of the selected subjects was 18 to 25 years. Stratified sampling technique was used to select 200 subjects.

2.2 Tools

2.2.1 Superstitious Scale:

The superstitious behaviour of college students athletes and non-athletes were assessed with the help of a reliable and valid scale constructed by Dubey and Dixit (2011). The scale had 40 statements with 03 alternatives. A higher score on this scale denotes enhanced superstitious behaviour.

2.3 Procedure:

1. 100 male intercollegiate sportspersons and 100 male non-sportsperson enrolled in various UG and PG courses were selected.
2. The superstitious scale was administered to each subject as prescribed by the author of this scale.
3. The scoring was carried out according to the instructions given in the authors manual.
4. Independent sample 't' test was used to compare superstitious behaviour in two study groups and the data analysis in table 1.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

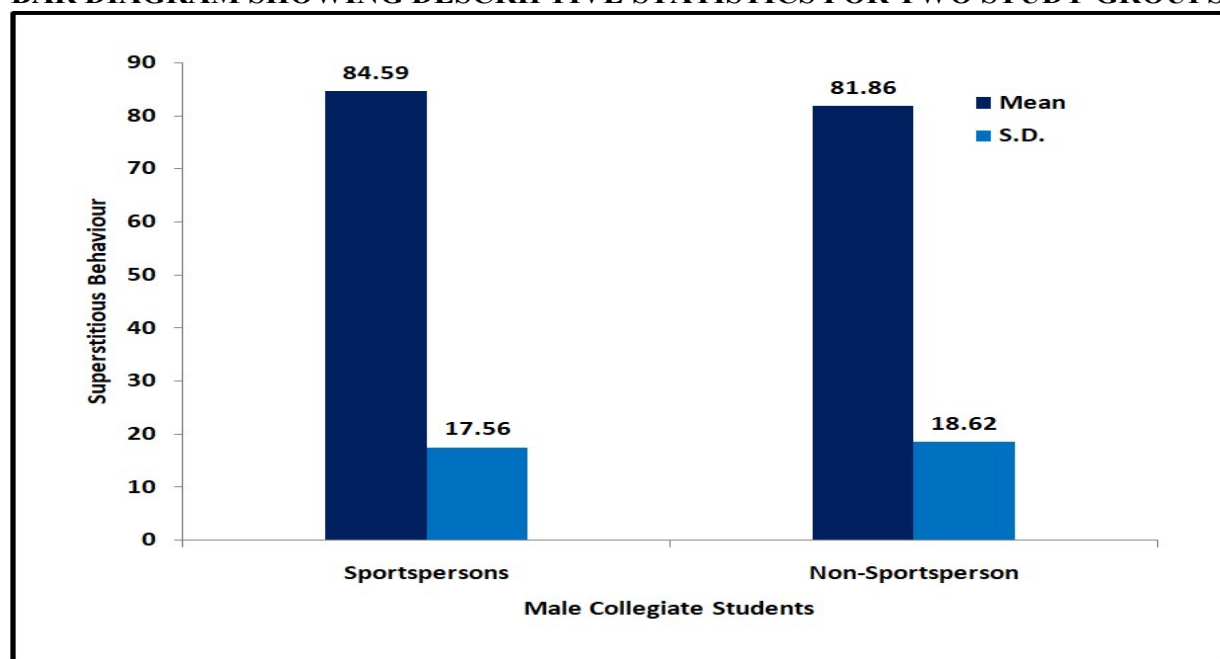
TABLE 1
COMPARISON OF SUPERSTITIOUS BEHAVIOUR BETWEEN INTERCOLLEGIATE MALE SPORTSPERSONS AND NON-SPORTSPERSONS ENROLLED IN UG AND PG COURSES

Variable	College Students enrolled in UG and PG courses						t
	Sportspersons			Non-sportsperson			
	N	Mean	SEM	N	Mean	SEM	
Superstitious Behaviour	100	84.59	1.755	100	81.86	1.862	1.06

t(df=198) = 1.97 at p<.05 and 2.60 at p<.01

A perusal of statistical figures given in table 1, it was found that the mean score on the superstitious scale for male intercollegiate sportsperson was 84.59 while the mean scores for non-sportsperson male college students was 81.86. The standard error of mean for a group consisting of male intercollegiate sportsperson was 1.755 whereas the standard error of mean for non-sportsperson male college students was 1.862. The calculated $t=1.06$ did not meet the criteria of statistical significance because the table value at $t(df=198) = 1.98$ is greater than the calculated value. Data analysis indicated that the superstitious behaviour among college students did not vary significantly based on participation in competitive sports.

FIGURE 1
BAR DIAGRAM SHOWING DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR TWO STUDY GROUPS



4. DISCUSSION

Results indicate a statistically non-significant difference in superstitious behaviour of collegiate students based on their participation in sports. **Gregory and Petrie's (1972)** reported similar results in their study. This study was conducted on University students of Western Ontario. The authors found that both athletes and non-athletes believe in carrying a lucky charm or doing certain physical movements. Like collegiate sportspersons, students with no participation in sports tend to cross their fingers before the announcement of results or wait for some time if the cat cuts the way. Hence the results of the present study are consistent with the reported findings in the research literature.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on results, it can be concluded that superstitious behaviour in male collegiate sportsperson and non-sportspersons did not differ and prove that the participation in sports is not a strong enough variable that influences the superstitious behaviour of male students enrolled in UG and PG programs in colleges..

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