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The Effect of Training the Transactional Analysis Skills on Athletes' Group Cohesion

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ABSTRACT

Background: The present study aimed to determine the effect of transactional analysis on group cohesion of athletes. **Objective:** The research sample consisted of 40 athletes of team sports [basketball, volleyball and handball]. Participants were randomly assigned to two experimental and control groups. Experimental group was trained in Transactional Analysis in 8 sessions, each session lasting 70 minutes. The control group, however, received no training. For data collection, the group environment questionnaire [GEQ] [Caron *et al*, 1998] was used. This questionnaire evaluates four components, cohesion of individuals and social task and cohesion of group and social task as a group in terms of both task and social cohesion. The participants in both groups answered the questionnaire simultaneously before and after training the experimental group. For data analysis on descriptive level, the spatial indices [mean] and dispersion [standard deviation] were used to assess the overall mean and dispersion of the distribution of data. On inferential level also, the analysis of covariance [ANCOVA] was used. **Results:** Findings indicated that the training of Transactional Analysis to athletes improved the general cohesion of the individuals. As for each component of cohesion, this training course had a positive impact on personal and social task cohesion, but did not have a significant impact upon the cohesion of group and social cohesion. **Conclusion:** The results indicate the positive impact of group training of transactional analysis to athletes and familiarizing them with the various aspects of their character upon group cohesion.

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INTRODUCTION

Sport is a microcosm of the larger society. According to this statement, studies in sports are of great importance for various reasons. Given this view, group cohesion merits attention because a group with greater cohesion is farther away from dissolution and the relationship between the members is maintained [1]. The study of the factors related to sports groups has a long history in sport psychology which is trying to progress and develop group working [2]. Basically, group cohesion has two social and task aspects [2]. Social cohesion is the amount of the individual's interest in staying in the group. Yet, the task cohesion is meaningful in terms of the effect of the individual on the group [2; 3].

One of the ways to improve the relationship, which can also be used in groups, is consultation with the method of Transactional Analysis [4]. This method seeks to overcome the barriers that cause problems in correct communication between people and its training is done mostly in groups. Transactional Analysis is a psychological approach founded by Eric Berne. Transactional Analysis widely addresses harmony and disharmony of messages exchanged in interpersonal interactions [5]. Since a communication problem causes inappropriate behaviors and disturbance in teamwork, improving the relationship can be a good solution. John Thompson the basketball coach of Georgetown University says: you can communicate without incentives, but you cannot motivate without communication [6]. As for the remarkable results in cohesion, one can mention Clifton's research, which stated that a less talented team with high group cohesion can defeat a less cohesive team with higher talents [7].

The word group has different meanings and function in terms of psychology and sociology [1]. One of the most comprehensive meanings is a group of two or more people with solidarity and common goals and

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relatively durable interactions, with each member considering himself as a part of the whole group [8]. If this meaning is properly clarified for members of the group, the premature collapse of the team can be avoided.

To help enhance the group cohesion of team members individually, people should be able to establish a better relationship in their domains [8; 9]. When people receive required education they will be able to control their manners using the techniques of solving problems in a logical way and understanding Transactional Analysis. They can also have a positive impact on people's peace and the sports environment, hence making the physical activity enjoyable for athletes and coaches and even fans in the tournaments. According to Eric Berne's theory, all humans have ego states of child, adult and parent and that at every moment of our life we play one of them in front of the child, adult, parent state of our counterpart [10]. Ego states include feelings, emotions, thinking, behavior, and manner [4; 11].

Some research have been done on the effect of Transactional Analysis training on reducing stress and on managing relationships [11], and all have demonstrated the positive impact of education. But, about the group cohesion in sports, no research was found. In the realm of Transactional Analysis, in a related article, the authors stated that research on Transactional Analysis began by Eric Berne in 1950 in his private and public research and has been used up to now in many research. But, in recent years, little attention has been paid to this area [12], which means, more research in this area is needed. And if result be helpful, this could greatly help to improve relations and sports conditions in society. There is a point for success in sport that it shows how important is to communication better, to be a successful specialist in sport and exercise, you should have strong communication skills [6]. The present study aimed to determine the effect of transactional analysis on group cohesion of athletes

Methodology:

The present study is applied given the main objective of the research. The research method is Semi-empirical carried out as field-study addressing the effect of training Transactional Analysis on group cohesion. This study was done with two experimental and control groups.

The population of this study included 60 women athletes in handball, volleyball and basketball teams in Sanandaj. 40 subjects were randomly chosen and divided into two groups of experimental and control groups, each having 20 subjects. The experimental group received Transactional Analysis training for 8 sessions of 70 minutes, 2 times a week. During training, the athletes got familiar with the basic concepts of the theory and practiced as necessary. The control group followed their usual activities and programs and received no training. Before starting and after the last session of the course, all athletes were asked to answer the questionnaire.

The tool used in this study was "group environment" questionnaire. This questionnaire was designed by krona, Widmayer and Brawly in 1985 based on the conceptual model of Caron [1982] to measure group cohesion in sports teams. In the form of 18 questions, it assesses group cohesion in both social and task cohesion in four components. The answers, based on Likert 9-value scale, were valued from strongly agree [9] to strongly disagree [1]. The validity of the questionnaire has been confirmed by Spink and Caron [1992]. The final version of the questionnaire has the best validity, so much so that it has been reported to be 0.75 for subscale of individual task cohesion, 0.70 for individual social cohesion, 0.64 for Task Group cohesion, and 0.76 for social cohesion group [13]. In Iran, the validity of the questionnaire was assessed in a study on 40 male and female athletes and the results showed that the questionnaire has simultaneous validity [13]. This questionnaire has been used in several studies in recent years in connection with group cohesion [14; 15].

In this study, the data obtained was analyzed by descriptive and inferential methods. On descriptive level, the spatial indices [mean] and dispersion [standard deviation] were used to assess the overall mean and dispersion of the data distribution. On inferential level, to observe the presupposition of equality of variances and covariance matrices of the two groups at pre-test of group cohesion aspects, Levine test and ANOVA were used. Then, analysis of covariance [ANCOVA] at a significance level of 0.05 was used to compare pre-test and post-test for control and experimental groups separately and to respond to the hypotheses. Data analysis was done using SPSS 18 software.

Results:

The descriptive information of group cohesion and its dimensions in the sample are shown in Table 1. As seen, the mean of the group cohesion and its dimensions in the experimental group is higher at post-test compared to pre-test. But, in the mean of group cohesion and its dimensions in the control group, no significant increase was witnessed at post-test compared to pre-test.

As for investigation of the research hypotheses, firstly Levine test and ANOVA were used to observe the presupposition of equality of variances and covariance matrices of the two groups at pre-test of group cohesion aspects. According to the results of Levine test, assuming equal variances of scores of group cohesion dimensions and the total score of group in both experimental group and the control group was confirmed in the pre-test [$P<0.05$]. This result indicates that in analysis of variances of the two groups at post-test, given the homogeneity of variances of groups at pre test, these effects will be independent variable [cohesion], playing a

Advances in Environmental Biology, 8(12) July 2014, Pages: 1464-1467

role in the potential difference between the scores of two groups. Also, ANOVA test revealed that the pre-test of the two groups were not significantly different in coherence dimensions and total score of group cohesion of experimental group and the control group [P<0. 05]. This finding indicates that the assumption of equal variances of scores of cohesion dimensions and total score of group cohesion in both experimental and control groups in the test is satisfied. Table 2 indicates the results of one-way analysis of covariance on the mean scores of the post test of group cohesion of both groups with pretest control.

Table 1: Descriptive information of group cohesion and its dimensions in the sample.

Variable Group		number	Statistic	individuals task cohesion	individuals social cohesion	Group task cohesion	Group social cohesion	Group cohesion
Experimental	Pre test	20	mean	16/75	26/6	29	16/65	88/4
			Standard deviation	5/21	5/661	4/507	4/428	5/977
	Post test	20	Mean	21/79	29/158	28/947	18/895	98/4
			Standard deviation	4/768	3/5	4/648	5/792	9/539
Control	Pre test	20	Mean	16	24/6	27/2	18/7	84/2
			Standard deviation	6/07	4/695	4/927	4/889	9/024
	Post test	20	Mean	17/526	25/684	27/895	17/526	87/65
			Standard deviation	5/901	3/667	5/772	3/518	10/08

Table 2: results of one-way analysis of covariance on the mean scores of the post test of group cohesion of both groups with pretest control.

Variable	Source of changes	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean of squares	F	Significance level	Squares	Statistical power
Group cohesion	Pre test	972/34	1	972/34	13/389	0/001*	0/266	0/945
	Group	589/181	1	589/181	8/113	0/007*	0/18	0/792
	Error	2687/01	37	72/622				
	Total	350961	40					

*p≤0,05

As can be seen in Table 2, with pretest control, there was a significant difference between the athletes of experimental and control groups in terms of group cohesion score [p=0. 007 and F=8. 113]. In other words, given the mean of group cohesion of the experimental group [98.40] compared to that of control group [87.65], teaching Transactional Analysis caused a significant increase in the group cohesion of experimental group. The effect or difference equals 0.18, it means 18% of individual differences in scores of group cohesion have to do with the impact of Transactional Analysis. Statistical power is equal to 0. 792, it means the possibility of Type II error was 0.21. Therefore, we conclude that training Transactional Analysis increases group cohesion of athletes.

As can be seen in Table 3, with pretest control, there was a significant difference between the athletes of experimental and control groups in terms of individual task cohesion [p=0. 024 and F=5.57]. And there was a significant difference between the athletes of experimental and control groups in terms of social personal cohesion [p=0.015 and F=6.55]. As you see, there was a significant difference between the athletes of experimental and control groups in terms of group task cohesion [p=0.641 and F=0.221]. At the end, there was a significant difference between the athletes of experimental and control groups in terms of social cohesion [p=0.295 and F=1133]. Therefore, we conclude that training transactional analysis increases social cohesion of athletes.

Conclusion:

The results indicate the positive impact of group training of transactional analysis to athletes and familiarizing them with the various aspects of their character upon group cohesion. Discussing the specific hypotheses of the research indicated that this training method has more impact on the two components of personal task cohesion and social cohesion for athletes get familiar with the structure of their character and their relationships are improved. It is while, this training did not have a significant impact on the other two components of the cohesion, group task and social cohesion. In general, it can be said that the overall coherence has been increased and it can improve the performance of the team with higher cohesion. According to the results of previous research on the role of coach and the results of the present study on the effectiveness of the training of athletes, we can make the conclusion that the method of training and coaches and athletes can be used in order to achieve better results and to witness progress and improvement in all components.

Advances in Environmental Biology, 8(12) July 2014, Pages: 1464-1467

Table 3: results of one-way analysis of covariance on the mean scores of the post test of cohesion component of both groups with pretest control.

Variable	Source of changes	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean of squares	F	Significance level	Squares	Statistical power
Individual task	Pre test	2/209	1	2/209	0/075	0/786	0/002	0/058
Individual social		49/204	1	49/204	4/166	*0/049	0/106	0/51
Group task		35/432	1	35/432	1/301	0/262	0/036	0/199
Group social		14/948	1	14/948	0/645	0/427	0/018	0/122
Individual task	Group	164/485	1	164/485	5/569	*0/024	0/137	0/631
Individual social		77/418	1	77/418	6/554	*0/015	0/158	0/702
Group task		6/108	1	6/108	0/221	0/641	0/006	0/074
Group social		26/263	1	26/263	1/133	0/295	0/031	0/179
Individual task	Error	1033/685	35	29/534				
Individual social		413/428	35	11/812				
Group task		935/305	35	27/237				
Group social		811/579	35	23/188				
Individual task	Total	15893	38					
Individual social		29150	38					
Group task		31694	38					
Group social		13446	38					

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