

Spirit of challenge and its relationship to orientation towards competition in Iraqi weightlifters with physical disabilities

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to identify the spirit of challenge and the orientation towards competition among Iraqi weightlifters with physical disabilities. The researchers employed a descriptive approach. The research sample was composed of 19 weightlifters representing Baghdad clubs in the sport of weightlifting for individuals with physical disabilities. The tests utilized in the research included the Scale of the Spirit of Challenge and Orientation Towards Competition, as well as the Test of Raising Pressure from Lying on the Bench for Weightlifting for Individuals with Disabilities. Lifters with physical disabilities have a high level of challenge spirit. There is a significant correlation between the challenge spirit and the results of the competitions. Attention to psychological variables is crucial due to its significant impact on the outcomes of competitions in weightlifting for individuals with physical disabilities.

KEYWORDS

Spirit of Competition; Physical Disabilities; Weightlifters

1. INTRODUCTION

The development across all fields and disciplines, particularly the growing interest in psychology in recent years, underscores the importance of utilizing the psychological aspect. Continuous studies in sports psychology have demonstrated that the success of athletes in championships often stems from high-level psychological preparation alongside training programs rooted in solid scientific principles (Allawai, 1996).

For weightlifting athletes, leveraging psychological and mental abilities alongside physical prowess is crucial. It is essential to harness their psychological capabilities to achieve optimal performance levels. In competitions, elite weightlifters require significant psychological preparation to excel, emphasizing the coach's role in understanding and enhancing their motivation levels. While

the coach can guide the player onto the field, maximizing their achievement necessitates recognizing their initial motivation and nurturing it through consistent training and the creation of opportunities for success tailored to the player's physical, psychological, skill, and mental capabilities (Allawai, 1996).

Paralympic weightlifting stands out as an individual sport heavily reliant on the capabilities of the athlete weightlifter, necessitating a seamless integration of both physical and psychological aspects. The unique nature of the sport underscores the importance of psychological preparation for weightlifters, enabling them to overcome challenges and achieve sporting success by lifting heavy weights. Research in this field aims to understand the spirit of challenge and competitive orientation among para-athletes in weightlifting, shedding light on the relationship between these factors and their performance in competitions. By uncovering these dynamics, the research seeks to enhance psychological support and training strategies tailored to the needs of para-weightlifters, ultimately fostering their success in the sport (Abdul & Al-Ani, 2012).

Drawing from their experience in the field of individuals with unique attributes, researchers have raised inquiries regarding the spirit of challenge and competitive drive among disabled weightlifters. Deliberately posing this question, the researchers aim to unearth genuine insights through in-depth investigation. This study endeavors to uncover the extent to which weightlifters with physical disabilities embrace the spirit of challenge and exhibit a competitive orientation. By delving into this research, the goal is to gain a deeper understanding of the motivations and attitudes of disabled weightlifters towards challenge and competition. The aim of this study is to identify the spirit of challenge and the orientation towards competition among Iraqi weightlifters with physical disabilities.

2. METHODS

2.1. Design and participants

The researchers used the descriptive approach. The research sample was composed of 19 weightlifters representing Baghdad clubs in the sport of weightlifting for individuals with physical disabilities. The original community consisted of twenty-three weightlifters, with four weightlifters excluded from the exploratory experiment, accounting for 82.60% of the original community.

In order to obtain homogeneity between the members of the research sample and to prevent influences that may affect the results of the experiment in terms of individual differences, the researchers evaluated the homogeneity of the sample (Table 1), and they found that the sample was homogenous.

Table 1. Homogeneity of the sample

Variables	Unit	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Homogeneity coefficient
Age	Year	17.50	0.841	0.546
Weight	Kg	75.80	0.366	0.493
Training age	Year	10.77	0.833	0.421

2.2. Instruments

First: Scale of the spirit of challenge and orientation towards competition

The researchers utilized the "Spirit of Challenge and Orientation Towards Competition" scale developed by Atwan (2016). This scale comprises sixty items with five alternatives ranging from "to a very large degree" to "to a very small degree." The scale underwent evaluation by experts and specialists to ensure its suitability for the studied sample. Some modifications were made to fulfill the necessary requirements, enabling researchers to work effectively with the studied sample and obtain results that accurately reflect reality. The statements are corrected according to the following: to a very large degree = 5 degrees, to a large degree = 4 degrees, to a medium degree = 3 degrees, to a small degree = two degrees, and to a very small degree = one degree.

Second: Test of raising pressure from lying on the bench for lifting weights for people with disabilities (Bench press)

The purpose of this test is to measure the maximum strength of the muscles of the arms of the weightlifter with disabilities. The weightlifter with disabilities lies on the bench with the belt attached, i.e. fixing the thighs with a special belt, and the weight catcher has a legal distance between the arms (81 cm), and works to extract the weight from the straps and bend the arms to the chest area, and extend the arms completely to the top. The highest weight is calculated for the weightlifter with disabilities and three attempts are given. There must be assistants standing on both sides of the weight in order to help the weightlifter when he is unable to lift the weight.

The validity and reliability of the two tests used in this research were confirmed according to the indications of previous authors (Baii, 1987; Hassanein, 1995; Imam, 1990; Radwan, 2006). The two tests were presented to a group of expert professors in psychology, physical education and sports sciences, and there was 100% agreement on the validity of the tests. Furthermore, the researchers employed the test-retest method, applying the tests to the same group of participants in the exploratory experiment.

2.3. Procedures

The exploratory experiment is a preliminary experimental study conducted by researchers on a small sample before conducting full-scale research. Its aim is to test research methods and tools. Additionally, according to Al-Mandalawi (1989), it serves as practical training for researchers to identify the advantages and disadvantages encountered during tests, allowing them to address these issues in future endeavors. To identify potential difficulties and obstacles that may arise during the implementation of the main experiment, the researchers conducted an exploratory experiment on Saturday, September 17, 2022. This involved individuals who were not part of the main experiment in the central hall. The objectives were to: identify the extent to which players understand the vocabulary of the tests; ensure the validity of the tools, devices and playgrounds that will be approved in the main experiment; identify the problems that the researchers may face for the purpose of overcoming them; identify the time needed; identify the validity of the place and the ease of application. The main experiment was conducted on the research sample on Saturday 8/10/2022.

2.4. Statistical analyses

We used SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for data analyses. The statistical methods used were arithmetic mean, standard deviation, homogeneity tests, and correlation analyses. The significance level was $p < 0.05$.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 shows the score of the sample in spirit of challenge and orientation towards competition. Table 2 illustrates that the arithmetic mean value reached 408 degrees, with a standard deviation of 17.5. Comparatively, the hypothetical mean stood at 238 degrees. Given that the arithmetic mean exceeds the hypothetical mean, it indicates that the research sample possesses a high spirit of challenge and orientation towards competition. This underscores the significance of the psychological aspect, particularly the spirit of challenge, among weightlifters with disabilities, contributing to their success in competitions.

Table 2. Spirit of challenge and orientation towards competition of the sample.

Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Hypothetical mean
408	17.5	238

To ascertain the correlation between the spirit of challenge, the orientation towards competition, and the competition results, data were analyzed using simple correlation coefficient (Pearson). Table 3 reveals a significant correlation between the spirit of challenge, the orientation towards competition, and the outcomes of competitions among Paralympic weightlifters.

Table 3. Correlation between the spirit of challenge, the orientation towards competition, and the outcomes of competitions among Paralympic weightlifters.

Tests	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Pearson correlation coefficient
Spirit of challenge and orientation towards competition	408	17.5	0.66
Competition results	373.31	17	

Table 3 indicates that the correlation coefficient value between the challenge level and the competition results in weightlifting for individuals with disabilities amounted to 0.66, with a degree of freedom of 24 and a probability of error of 0.01. This value exceeds the tabular value of 57.0, signifying a significant correlation between the spirit of challenge, orientation towards competition, and competition outcomes in weightlifting for individuals with disabilities. Therefore, it can be concluded that a higher spirit of challenge and orientation towards competition in weightlifting for individuals with disabilities positively impacts competition results.

As an integral component of human psychological makeup, one's orientation towards goals significantly influences the personality, physical and psychological abilities, as well as their approach to life's challenges. Individuals who perceive themselves as lacking in ability may shy away from challenges, exhibit reduced resilience in the face of difficulties, and may even disengage from sports if they perceive goal achievement as daunting. Notably, a strong correlation exists between competitive orientation and performance direction, indicating that athletes with disabilities attributing their success to psychological factors tend to focus more on performance. Such athletes, driven by the spirit of challenge and competition, exhibit qualities conducive to building self-confidence, such as diligence, commitment to training, and striving to surpass others, ultimately aiming for perfection. This association between the spirit of challenge, competition, and performance fosters positive outcomes in sports, empowering athletes to attribute their successes to their efforts and motivating them to strive for further achievements (Al-Naqib, 1990). Furthermore, an athlete's level of ambition and performance expectations directly impact their actual performance, with past successes or failures influencing their ambitions and goals. Consequently, athletes must learn to regulate their actions, thoughts, and emotions to navigate through these challenges effectively. Coaches play a

crucial role in this dynamic, leveraging their expertise to help athletes maintain composure, conceal agitation, and instill confidence during competitions characterized by intense pressure. Effective coaching strategies encompass a variety of methods tailored to the unique circumstances of each competition and the individual psychological characteristics of the athlete, highlighting the coach's role in guiding athletes through the intricacies of sports conflicts.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Weightlifters with physical disabilities have a high level of challenge spirit. There is a significant correlation between the challenge spirit and the results of the competitions. Attention to psychological variables is crucial due to its significant impact on the outcomes of competitions in weightlifting for individuals with physical disabilities. By focusing on the psychological aspects, such as motivation, confidence, and mental resilience, lifters with disabilities can effectively channel their efforts towards achieving their goals. These psychological factors play a pivotal role in enhancing performance and ensuring that athletes can perform to the best of their abilities despite facing physical challenges. Therefore, understanding and addressing the psychological needs of lifters with disabilities are essential for their success in competitive weightlifting, as they contribute to their ability to accurately pursue and attain their desired objectives.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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