

The Perceived Significance of Spirituality on Sri Lankan National Team Players' Performance

Perera H. P. N.*

Department of Sports Science, Faculty of Applied sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Gangodawila, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka

Jusoh M.

Graduate School of Management, Post Graduate Centre (PGC) Management and Science University, Malaysia

Azam S. M. F.

Graduate School of Management, Management and Science University, Malaysia

Sudasinghe S. R. S. N.

Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration, Sri Lanka

Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to analyze the relationship between spirituality and perceived performance in team sports players. A standard spirituality questionnaire was used to assess the exogenous variable. The endogenous variable of the study was perceived performance and was measured through a questionnaire of a likert scale which was adopted from literature. Subjective performances of the players were derived opposed to objective performance. Data had been collected from Sri Lankan national team players who are engaged in team sports of football, basketball, Elle, volleyball, Hockey, Kabaddi, Netball, Rugby and Throw ball. The study population was 308 national team players and the universal sampling technique was used. The study results reveal that there is a positive relationship between spirituality and performance of the players.

Keywords: Spirituality; Subjective performance; Perceived performance; Objective performance.



CC BY: [Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

1. Introduction

Success of sports is widely measured through the performance of the players'. According to a brilliant basketball coach namely, John Woodman, "Success is peace of mind, which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best that you are capable of becoming". Nevertheless the power of a sports team, prestige and the wealth is decided upon the successive performance of a team.

The sports performance of Sri Lanka in international arena is recorded to be low (Perera and Pushpakumari, 2015a;2016; Perera, 2018;2019). There are many factors affecting the player's sports performance (Perera, 2019) and there are factors which are controllable by the players while some are uncontrollable (De Bossche *et al.*, 2006; Torkashvand *et al.*, 2016). The dynamics which deal with the mental reasoning of the athletes are the psychological factors. These are the factors which involves with the conduct and the performance of the players. Scholars have found that psychological factors are the crucial facilitating factors in enhancing expertise but yet least prominence has been placed on such factors by the researchers (Abbott and Collins, 2002; Habibian *et al.*, 2015). There are arrays of psychological facets affecting players' performance. Spirituality is one of the psychological factors, which is being least tapped in sports domain. Therefore the main intension of this study is to analyze the impact of spirituality on players' sports performance.

2. Literature Review

Studies conducted in relation to Sport science can measure many facets of human performance, nevertheless the spiritual dimensions with regard to sports experience cannot be entirely understood through such measurement (Parry *et al.*, 2007). Yet, the spiritual experience of sport (described as flow Csikszentmihalyi (1975), transcendence or the discovery of meaning and value) is a fundamental factor for participation in sports, and to achieving victory (Parry *et al.*, 2007).

Spirituality is merely a belief, which is embedded with individuals with their birth. Spirituality beliefs basically accompanied with family rituals. It is frequently flows through generation to generation. Sri Lanka is a multi-racial and multi-cultural country (Perera, 2019). The most prominent prevailing family structure in Sri Lanka is the extended family which is beyond the nuclear family and it includes grandparents and other relatives also. There is a huge impact from such families to the children on their spirituality beliefs. The culture persist in Sri Lanka is basically harmonized with religiosity. Sri Lankan Culture is nourished with facets of Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Catholic beliefs and Islam beliefs. Since all the religious groups lives together in Sri Lanka in many of the provinces, the beliefs and rituals of all religions are blended. Religiosity acts as the most influential factor for

many of the decisions of the natives of Sri Lanka. Therefore, religiosity and spirituality are widely discussed as two sides of the same coin. Religion is defined as “a system of beliefs in divine or superhuman power, and practices of worship or other rituals directed toward such a power” (Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi, 1975) whereas spirituality is defined as “experiencing the presence of a power, a force and energy or god close to you Dillon and Tiat (2000). Spirituality can be defined through visualizing sanctification (Fernandez et al., 2016). Sanctification is the psychological method by which individuals recognize or dynamically interpret aspects of life as having a spiritual character or meaning (Pargament and Mahoney, 2005).

Sri Lankan coaches have to deal with players who hold extensively divergent values and beliefs about their sporting and everyday life (Biyawila and Perera, 2018; Watson and Nesti, 2005). Elkins et al. (1988) stated that spirituality exists in all individuals and Watson and Nesti (2005), stated that significant number of athletes will have spiritual or religious beliefs. Yet, spirituality has received little emphasis in the sport psychology literature (Parry et al., 2007).

Literature on positive psychology (Aspinwall and Staudinger, 2003; Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) describes spirituality as having an important role in accelerating excellence in human activities and increasing well-being and health (Watson and Nesti, 2005). Thus, its being found that spirituality plays a vital role in enhancing sports performance (Dillon and Tiat, 2000; Watson and Nesti, 2005).

The endogenous variable of this research is the perceived performance of the players. There is empirical evidence regarding performance measurement mechanism: (a) objective performance, (b) subjective performance, and (c) a combination of both subjective and objective sports performance measures. Objective measures considered the actual performance scores which would be measured through win loss percentages, points accumulated in a medal table and many more (Perera and Pushpakumari, 2015a;2015c;2015b;2016; Vella et al., 2013), shots taken in golf (Gaudreau and Blondin, 2004), batting average in baseball (Nicholls et al., 2016; Smith and Christensen, 1995), or performance time on a rowing test (Hatzigeorgiadis, 2006). Subjective assessments of performance is measured by considering the perception of the player on his/her performance, or the perception of the coaches and/or spectator's on performance of the athlete reporting the extent to which they are satisfied with the performance of the said player (Besharat and Pourbohloul, 2011; Perera, 2019). Few scholars utilized a combination of both objective and subjective assessments to indicate a measure of performance (Gaudreau and Blondin, 2004).

The present study considers subjective performance which involves athletes reporting the degree to which they are satisfied with their performance on a Likert-type scale.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Population and Sample

Study participants were 308 male (179) and female (129) team players who represent Sri Lanka National team sports in 2018/2019. The whole population was taken into consideration (Census) and the questionnaires were distributed among the total population. The mean age of the players was 25 ± 4.3 . The team sports considered were: football (19.5%), basketball (8.4%), Elle (10%), volleyball (14%), Hockey (13%), Kabaddi (13.6%), Netball 96.5%), Rugby (9%) and Throw ball (6%).

3.2. Data Collection

Questionnaire was used to collect data from the players to measure the goal orientation and performance. Spirituality was measured through a questionnaire adopted from Dillon and Tiat (2000), while the measure for perceived performance of players was adopted from Lemmink et al. (2008). The questionnaire was pilot tested and received a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.82 and 0.93 respectively for spirituality and performance constructs, which is higher than the cutoff value suggested by Nunnally (1978).

Based on the theoretical substances and literature following hypothesis was derived and examined.

Hypothesis 1 : There is a significant relationship between Spirituality and perceived performance of the players

4. Results and Discussion

The associations of spirituality and perceived performance of the players were analyzed using a Structural Equation Modeling procedure (SEM). Goodness of fit is the foremost output that can be extracted from the first phase of SEM data analysis. Comparative fit index (CFI), Chi-square statistics (CMIN), Tucker Lewis index (TLI), Root Mean Square error of Approximation (RMSEA), were examined according to Hair et al. (2010).

To illustrate the validity of exogenous and endogenous variables (Spirituality and Performance), factor loading analyses were conducted and individual constructs were taken into consideration separately. Spirituality indicators are offered as primary and modified measurement models in Figure 1. In this figure, the numbers indicated on paths signify the factor loadings between spirituality and its indicators. The acceptable level of standardized factor loading is to be more than 0.5 (Argyris and Schön, 1997).

A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is a powerful and flexible statistical technique which is commonly used in psychology research (Gallagher and Brown, 2013). CFA considers on exhibiting the relationship between manifest (observed) indicators and underlying latent variables (Gallagher and Brown, 2013).

The tested model for spirituality is shown in Figure 1a is not acceptable (Chi-Square/df <3, RMSEA <0.08). Modification indices showed that SP4 was highly correlated with SP5. Therefore, SP4 was dropped but the CR value for multivariate Kurtosis was 13.38.

However, in testing for multivariate normality, the CR value for multivariate Kurtosis is 47.725 which are more than five (5). Therefore, the multivariate assumption was not met. As a resolution, Bootstrap analysis was performed with 1000 applicants, and results revealed a p-value of 0.22 which concluded that model correctness was achieved.

Figure-1. (a) Primary Measurement Model; (b) Modified Measurement Model. Primary and modified measurement models of Spirituality

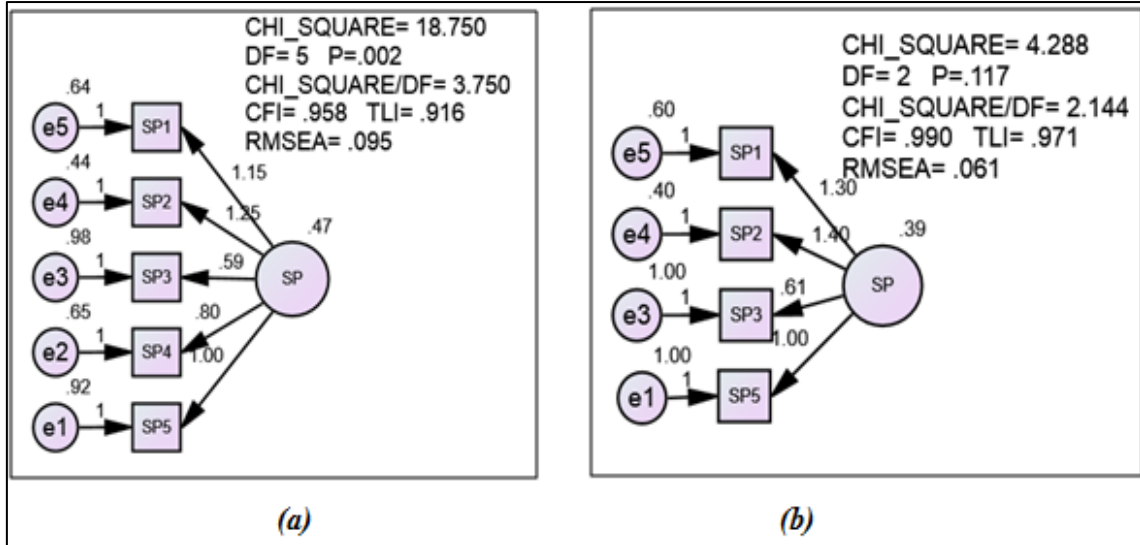


Table-1. Model fitting analysis for primary and modified measurement models of Spirituality

Fit Index	Primary Model	Critical (Acceptable) Value	Modified Model
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.958	>0.9	0.990
Tucker Lewis Index (TLI)	0.916	>0.9	0.971
Normed Chi Square (Chi/Df)	3.750	<0.3	2.144
Root Mean Square Error Of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.095	<0.085	0.061

Perceived performance was the latent variable of the study. Similar analysis was done as above to attain the model correctness. The measurement model was developed, after deriving the model correctness.

4.1. Measurement Model

After conducting CFA, the measurement model was derived. This model is illustrated in Figure 2 which certifies that it had accorded all the modification indices and therefore, the model correctness was attained. Consequently, the measurement model was taken into consideration as the final model for further investigation.

Figure-2. Model – Exhibit the relationship between spirituality and perceived performance

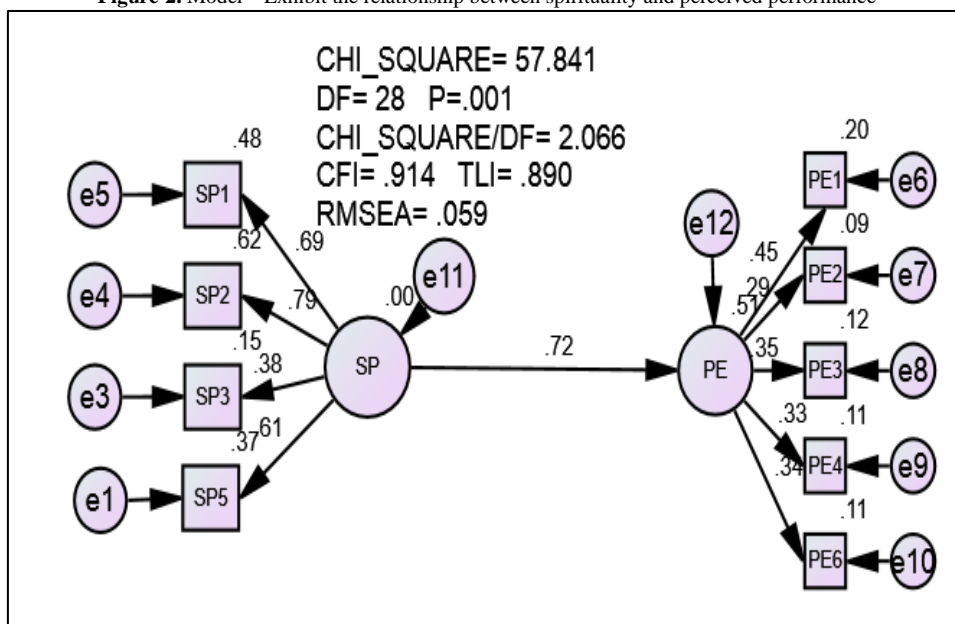


Table 2. Depicts the summary of modification indices to assess whether the model is fit enough for further analysis

Table-2. Model fit study for measurement models of spirituality and perceived performance relationship

Fit Index	Primary Model	Critical (Acceptable) Value	Modification Requirement
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.914	>0.9	(all most close to 0.9) Model is considered as accepted
Tucker Lewis Index (TLI)	0.890	>0.9	
Normed Chi Square (Chi/Df)	2.066	<0.3	
Root Mean Square Error Of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.059	<0.085	

After conducting the CFA, Average variance extracted (AVE) was reported as 0.504 and Composite Reliability (CR) was drawn as 0.5 which depicts the model to be accepted.

4.3. Structural Model

Structural modeling is applied next to identify the hypothesized connection among research constructs (exogenous or endogenous), which is linked to the assumed model's concept.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): There is a significant relationship between spirituality and perceived performance of the players.

According to Figure 2, all the threshold limits of the modification indices were achieved. According to Figure 2, there is a strong positive relationship between spirituality and perceived performance of the players.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The main concentration of this study was made in this research was to assess the relationship between spirituality and perceived performance of the players. The overarching objective was to synthesize data from SEM in order to examine the relationship between said variables.

The study results reveal that there is a association between spirituality and perceived team performance of the players. Results, furthermore reveals that when spirituality beliefs are higher, players perceive that their performance also to be higher leading to a positive relationship ($\beta = .129, P < .001$).

Qualitative studies done by several scholars had proven that spirituality beliefs leads to better performance of the players (Johnson, 2011; Sarkar et al., 2014). The results of the current study are consistent with the empirical findings of research conducted by Javanmard (2012). Based on Arak's Machinery Company study findings it was revealed that work place spirituality impacts on employee performance (Javanmard, 2012). The results also complied with Pandey et al. (2016), Maleki et al. (2012), Garg (2017) and (Malik and Naeem, 2011).

The pragmatic result of this study concluded that the hypothesis regarding spirituality is accepted. Sri Lanka culture is enriched with Buddhist philosophy, ad other religious beliefs persist in the country. Vast number of individuals in Sri Lanka relies and believes on spiritual presence. The players of team sports in Sri Lanka, tend to get the blessings of the three religious preachers before any tournament, which show how players depend on aspects of spirituality.

References

- Abbott, A. and Collins, D. (2002). A theoretical and empirical analysis of a 'state of the art' talent identification model. *High Ability Studies*, 13(2): 157-78.
- Argyle, M. and Beit-Hallahmi, B. (1975). *The social psychology of religion*. Routledge and Kegan Paul: London.
- Argyris, C. and Schön, D. (1997). Organizational learning: A theory of action perspective. *Reis: Revista española de investigaciones. Sociológicas*, 77: 345-48. Available: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=760537>
- Aspinwall, L. and Staudinger, U. (2003). *A psychology of human strengths: Fundamental questions and future directions for a positive psychology*. (U. Staudinger, Ed.). American Psychological Association: Washington DC.
- Besharat, M. and Pourbohloul, S. (2011). Moderating effects of self-confidence and sport self-efficacy on the relationship between competitive anxiety and sport performance. *Psychology*, 2(7): 70-765.
- Biyanwila, B. and Perera, H. (2018). *Associated factors for efficient development of school sports system for national level sports in Sri Lanka. Basic and applied sciences*. General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University: Colombo. 11: 29.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1975). *Beyond boredom and anxiety*. Jossey-Bass: San Fransisco.
- De Bossche, V., De Knop, P., Bottenburg, M. and Shibli, S. (2006). A conceptual framework for analysing sports policy factors leading to international sporting success. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 6(2): 185-215.
- Dillon, K. and Tiat, J. (2000). Spirituality and being in the zone in team sports: A relationship? *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 23(2): 91-100.
- Elkins, D., Hedstrom, L., Hughes, L. L. J. and Saunders, C. (1988). Toward a humanistic-phenomenological spirituality: Definition, description, and measurement. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 28(4): 5-18.

- Fernandez, N., Schnitker, S. and Houlberg, B. (2016). Charitable sporting events as a context for building adolescent generosity: Examining the role of religiousness and spirituality. *Religions*, 7(35): 1-13.
- Gallagher, M. and Brown, T. (2013). *Introduction to confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling*. In t. Teo, and T. Teo (ed.), *handbook of quantitative methods for educational research*. SensePublishers: Rotterdam. 289-314.
- Garg, N. (2017). Workplace spirituality and organizational performance in indian context: Mediating effect of organizational commitment, work motivation and employee engagement. *South Asian Journal of Human Resources Management*, 4(2): 191-211.
- Gaudreau, P. and Blondin, J. (2004). Different athletes cope differently during sport competition: a cluster analysis of coping. *Pers. Ind. Diff*, 36(8): 1865-77.
- Habibian, M., Roslan, S., Idris, K. and Othman, J. (2015). The role of psychological factors in the process of reading. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(29): 114-23.
- Hair, J., Black, W., Babin, B. and Anderson, R. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis*. 7th edn: Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.
- Hatzigeorgiadis, A. (2006). Approach and avoidance coping during task performance in young men: the role of goal attainment expectancies. *J. Sport. Sc.*, 24(3): 299-307.
- Javanmard, H. (2012). The impact of spirituality on work performance. *Indian J. Sci. Technol.*, 5(1): 1961-66.
- Johnson, M. (2011). *Gold rush: What makes an olympic champion?* : UK: Harper Sport: London.
- Lemmink, K., Nederhof, E. and Visscher, C. (2008). Psychomotor speed is related to perceived performance in rowers. *European Journal of Sport Science*, 8(5): 259-65.
- Maleki, M., Jafari, H., Safari, H. and Khodayari-Zarnaq, R. (2012). The relationship between spiritual leadership and quality of work life in an iranian educational medical hospital. *Health Information Management*, 8(8): 1017-24.
- Malik, M. and Naeem, B. (2011). Role of spirituality in job satisfaction and organizational commitment among faculty of institutes of higher learning in Pakistan. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(4): 1236-44.
- Nicholls, A., Taylor, N., Carroll, S. and Perry, J. L. (2016). The development of a new sport-specific classification of coping and a meta-analysis of the relationship between different coping strategies and moderators on sporting outcomes. *Frontiers in psychology*, 7: 1-14. Available: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310487791_The_Development_of_a_New_Sport-Specific_Classification_of_Coping_and_a_MetaAnalysis_of_the_Relationship_between_Different_Coping_Strategies_and_Moderators_on_Sporting_Outcomes
- Nunnally, J. (1978). *Psychometric theory*. 2nd edn: McGraw-Hill: New York.
- Pandey, A., Gupta, R. K. and Kumar, P. (2016). Spiritual climate and its impact on learning in teams in business organizations. *Global Business Review*, 17(3): 1-14.
- Pargament, K. I. and Mahoney, A. (2005). Sacred matters: Sanctification as a vital topic for the psychology of religion. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 15(3): 179–262.
- Parry, J., Robinson, S., Watson, N. and Nesti, M. (2007). *Sport and spirituality: An introduction*. Routledge: New York.
- Perera, H. (2018). *Factors affecting coach leadership styles and team success: The mediating role of coach leadership behavior*. *Management social sciences and humanities*. General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University: Colombo. 40.
- Perera, H. (2019). Does the coach leadership behavior mediates the influence of factors affecting coach leadership behavioral styles on team success. *International Journal of Human Movement and Sports Sciences*, 7(3): 155-57.
- Perera, H. and Pushpakumari, M., 2015a. "An empirical study of Situational, Leader and Team member characteristics on coach leadership behavior styles Exhibited by the coaches of state Universities in Western Province." In *International conference on Multidisciplinary Approaches-2015 (ICMA) (p. 158)*. Colombo: Faculty of Graduate studies, University Of Sri Jayewardenepura. p. 158.
- Perera, H. and Pushpakumari, M. (2015b). The perception of athletes on the factors affecting to coach leadership behavior styles: An empirical study on leadership styles exhibited by the coaches of state universities in western province- sri lanka. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 2(2): 83-91.
- Perera, H. and Pushpakumari, M. (2015c). The perception of athletes on the factors affecting to coach leadership behavior styles: An empirical study of coach leadership styles exhibited by the coaches of state universities in western province Sri Lanka. *International journal of Multidisciplinary studies (IJMS)*, 2(2): 83-91.
- Perera, H. and Pushpakumari, M. (2016). *The relationship between coach leadership behavior and team success in sports of state universities in western, province Sri Lanka*. *Incotem*. Department of Management of Technology, University of Moratuwa, Katubedda: Colombo.
- Sarkar, M., Hill, D. and Parker, A. (2014). Working with religious and spiritual athletes: ethical considerations for sport psychologists. *Psychol. Sport Exerc*, 15(6): 580-87.
- Seligman, M. and Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55(1): 5-14.
- Smith, R. and Christensen, D. (1995). Psychological skills as predictors of performance and survival in professional baseball. *J. Sport Exerc. Psychol.*, 17(4): 399-415.

- Torkashvand, F., Rezaeian, M., Sheikh-Fathollahi, M., Mohammadreza, K., Hatami, P. and Bidaki, R. (2016). A survey on psychiatric disorders in patients improved cutaneous leishmaniasis in the city of rafsanjan in 2014. *J. R. U. M. S.*, 14(10): 879-94.
- Vella, S., Oades, L. and Crowe, T. (2013). The relationship between coach leadership, the coach-athlete relationship, team success, and the positive developmental experiences of adolescent soccer players. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 18(5): 549-61.
- Watson, N. and Nesti, M. (2005). The role of spirituality in sport psychology consulting: an analysis and integrative review of literature. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 17(3): 228-39.