PERCEIVED LEVEL OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SPORT PERFORMANCE OF YANGON UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS BASKETBALL ATHLETES

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Abstract

This study examined the Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Sport Performance (SP) of athletes from the **Yangon University of Economics**. A total of 34 basketball players were involved in the cross-sectional survey representing the open-skill athletes. The perceived levels of EI and SP of the athletes were assessed through self-rating, using a structured questionnaire with Likert scale items. In general, open-skill athletes often exhibited high EI levels only in relationship management. It was found that most of the athletes had EI scores within the effective functioning or enhanced skills level. The possible relationship between the athletes' level of EI and SP was examined via Spearman's correlation. Results revealed that the SP of basketball players (open-skill athletes) was significantly correlated ($P<0.05$) to relationship management ($r=0.903$) but not significantly correlated ($P>0.1$) to their self-awareness ($r=0.736$), self-management ($r=0.874$) and social awareness ($r=0.929$). In general, it can be deduced that the SP level of the open-skill athletes appeared to improve with increasing EI level. Implementation of motivational programs aimed at enhancing the EI levels among open-skilled athletes are recommended to boost their SP during the game.

Keywords: Athlete, Basketball, Emotional Intelligence, Sports

Introduction

The Yangon University of Economics is a State University which is under the Department of Higher Education (Yangon Region, Myanmar), Ministry of Education. Sports events at YU Eco also play a crucial role in building team spirit and fostering a sense of camaraderie among students. Whether on the basketball court, volleyball court, badminton court, or football field, these events provide opportunities for students to work together as a team. Basketball Club, Volleyball Club, Badminton Club, Football Club, and Boat Club Rowing exemplify YU Eco's commitment to nurturing talent and fostering a sense of community within these sports. YU Eco continues to thrive, these sports initiatives remain integral to the university's culture, nurturing talent and contributing to a vibrant sports scene that enriches the lives of its students and the legacy of Yangon University of Economics.

The application of various psychological strategies in sports, including relaxation, goal setting, mental rehearsal, visualization, and self-talk have been associated with athletes' game performance (Clough et al., 2012). It has been suggested that emotions influence an individual's

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behavior, and as such, it is considered as one of the major factors that determine an athlete's competence in sports.

Previous research elucidating the possible relationship between various personality variables and sport performance (SP) were focused on examining significant associations between psychological skills (e.g., self-motivation, self-confidence, arousal and active concentration, attention control, stress regulation, and coping with adversities) and effective (Bal et al., 2011). This has led to arguments concerning the validity of using various psychological inventories in the selection of athletes based on certain predictor variables for success in sports. In this regard, the development of inventories designed specifically for athletes have been advocated by eminent sport psychologists such as Anshel (2003), allowing for an objective measure of potential factors that support peak performance during sports events (Bal et al., 2011). In general, sports may be categorized into two types: open-skill or closed-skill sports (Wang, et al., 2013)

Open-skill sports such as football, badminton, and basketball involve the execution of sport skills in a constantly changing and unpredictable way (Di Russo et al., 2010). Thus, athletes are required to have skills that will allow them to adapt instability of the environment, which is deemed to be perceptual and externally paced (Zaugg, 2007).

There are four basketball teams each containing ten members. This study focuses only on forty male and female basketball players in YU Eco during the Academic Year 2022-23. This study aimed to determine the perceived level of EI and SP of University players in YU Eco during the Academic Year 2022-23. Specifically, the study investigated the level of EI of the open-skill (basketball) athletes, with respect to four EI domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. The athletes' self-rated SP score was also determined. The possible relationship between the athletes' EI level on four domains and self-rated SP scores was tested for significance. Results of this study will serve as basis in the formulation of effective intervention programs aimed at enhancing the game performance of the athletes, particularly those involved in basketball.

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the effect of Emotional Intelligence on Sports Performance of basketball Athletes in Yangon University of Economics.

Scope and Method of the Study

Among the 4 Graduate Degree Programmes during Academic Year 2022-2023, two majors are selected randomly. This study focuses on basketball students from Bachelor of Economics (BEcon /Eco) and Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA). The sample size is thirty-four according to the Census Sampling Method. Data have been collected from BEcon/Eco and BBA basketball players by using personal interview methods using a structured questionnaire and google form. Secondary data are collected from previous studies, university records and related textbooks.

This descriptive survey is based on the cross-sectional study design, which is generally employed to describe the attributes of a certain group in terms of behavior, attitude, or perception (Mathers et al., 2009). This survey research was conducted to examine the perceived level of EI

and SP among university basketball players in YU Eco during the Academic Year 2022-23. Involvement in the study was purely voluntary, and participants were allowed to withdraw at any stage.

Literature Review

Theories and Concepts

Emotional intelligence (EI) or emotional quotient (EQ) is the ability to perceive, interpret, demonstrate, control, evaluate, and use emotions to communicate with and relate to others effectively and constructively. This ability to express and control emotions is essential, and at the same time its ability is to understand, interpret, and respond to the emotions of others. (Cherry, 2023). According to Goleman (1998) emotional intelligence comprises a group of five skills, which are Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Motivation, Empathy and Social Skill.

Self-awareness is the first component of emotional intelligence—which makes sense when one considers that the Delphic oracle gave the advice to "know thyself" thousands of years ago. Self-awareness means having a deep understanding of one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, needs, and drives. People with strong self-awareness are neither overly critical nor unrealistically hopeful. Rather, they are honest— with themselves and with others. (Goleman, 1998)

Social Awareness is the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

Self-regulation, which is also referred to as "self-control" or "self-management" is the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods and the propensity to suspend judgment – to think before acting (Goleman, 1998). It involves maintaining control over one's own actions and reactions, even in challenging or emotionally charged situations. Self-management is critical for personal development and success. Key aspects of self-management include Emotional regulation, Impulse control, Stress management, Time management, Goal setting and achievement, Adaptability and Self-discipline. Self-management enables individuals to make better decisions, handle stress more effectively, maintain healthy relationships, and work towards long-term success. It can be developed through self-awareness, practice, and the implementation of various self-regulation techniques and strategies.

Relationship management, often referred to as interpersonal or social relationship management, is our ability to communicate clearly, maintain good relationships with others, connect with those from other cultures, work well in teams, and manage conflict. Relationship management relies on your ability to use the other three areas of EQ to manage relationships effectively (Radtke, 2023). Effective relationship management helps foster trust, mutual understanding, and cooperation. Key elements of relationship management include Communication, Empathy, Conflict resolution, Collaboration, Networking, Influence and persuasion, Trust-building, and Boundary setting.

Sport performance refers to the ability of an athlete or a team to excel in their chosen sport. (What is Sport Peformance? Definition and How to Improve, 2023). Sport performance in basketball refers to an athlete's ability to perform effectively and efficiently in the sport of

basketball. It encompasses various physical, technical, tactical, and mental aspects that contribute to success on the basketball court. Key elements that contribute to sport performance in basketball: Physical Fitness, Technical Skills including shooting, dribbling, passing, rebounding, and defending, Tactical Understanding including knowledge of offensive plays, defensive formations, fast breaks, pick-and-roll plays, and zone defenses, Teamwork, Court Awareness, Mental Toughness, Game Strategy, Conditioning, Injury Prevention, Adaptability and Goal Setting. Successful basketball players and teams combine these elements to compete at their best and achieve their goals on the court.

Conceptual Framework

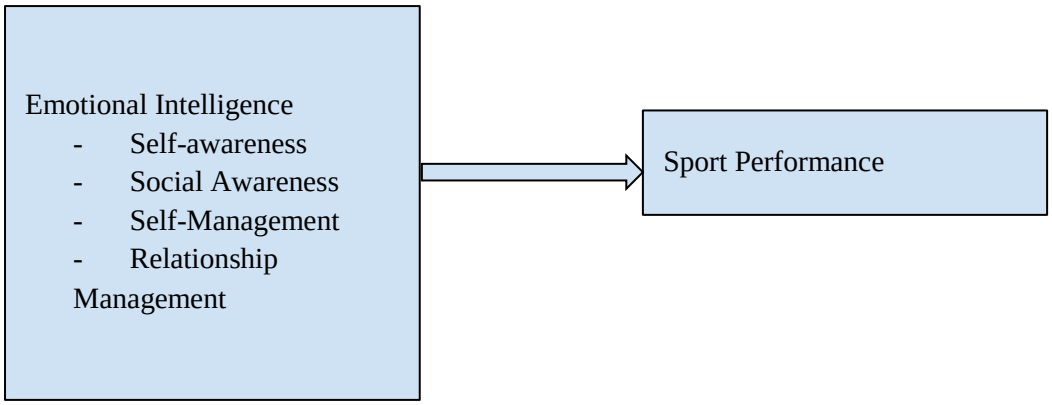

Figure. 1 Conceptual Framework of the study

Source: Own Compilation (adopted from Dandan et al., 2019)

Data Analysis

All survey data were organized in Microsoft® Excel and separate cross-checking was subsequently done by two different individuals. Population mean (μ), and standard deviation (SD) were used to describe the athletes' EI and SP scores. The athletes' EI effectiveness based on their EI total score in the four domains was summarized using actual counts and percentages. The Spearman's correlation in IBM® SPSS® Statistics was also employed to examine the possible relationships between the athletes' SP and EI at 95% level of confidence. Reliability of the measured variables is examined by using Cronbach's Alpha and are shown in Table (1).

Table (1) Self-Reported EI Levels and Results of Reliability Test.

STATEMENT INDICATORS	**OPEN-SKILL ATHLETE**	**Cronbach Alpha**
Self-Awareness	3.06 ± 0.70	.736
Self-Management	3.66 ± 0.77	.874
Social Awareness	4.18 ± 1.07	.929
Relationship Management	3.69 ± 0.78	.903
Sport Performance	3.34 ± 0.50	.582

Findings of Emotional Intelligence of Basketball Athletes

For Self-Awareness domain, the Mean score of Yangon University of Economics basketball players is 3.06 indicating average Self-Awareness and high SD of 0.70 indicating high variation among players. The lowest score questions have a mean score of 2.74 and their moods are hardly aware of the impact of their co-players around them. They cannot readily tell others (e.g., teammates) of their true feelings. They find it not easy to describe their feelings. The highest score question that they are aware of is what is happening to them, even when they are upset as a mean score of 3.65 and SD of 1.37. For the Self-Management domain, the Mean score of basketball players is 3.66 indicating that they have average Self-Management and high SD of 0.77 indicating high variation among players. It is noteworthy that the players have a high willingness to take responsibility for their reactions. The Mean Score for the Question is 4.26 with SD of 1.14. For the Social Awareness domain, the Mean score of basketball players is 4.18 indicating that they have high Social Awareness and high SD of 1.07 indicating high variation among players. It is noteworthy that the players have a high willingness to understand their co-players/teammates when there is a change of plan. The Mean Score for the Question is 4.03 with SD of 1.11. For the Relationship Management domain, the Mean score of Yangon University of Economics basketball players is 3.69 indicating that they have average Relationship Management and high SD of 0.78 indicating high variation among players. It is noteworthy that the players have a high willingness to help their co-players/teammates when they need them. The mean Score for the Question is 4.09 with SD of 1.06.

Analysis on Emotional Intelligence of Basketball Athletes

The EI scores of basketball players with reference to the four EI domains were determined based on their personal perceptions. In general, the results show that basketball athletes had relatively high scores (composite $\mu > 4$) in the one EI domain (Social Awareness) and average scores in three EI domains (Self-Awareness, Self-Management and Relationship Management). These findings suggest that Yangon University of Economics basketball players showed high levels of Social Awareness while having average Self-Awareness, Self-Management and Relationship Management. It is interesting that all four EI domains had high SD (more than 0.70) indicating a wide range of Emotional Intelligence among players.

The open athletes were classified according to their EI effectiveness (Table-6). Most of the basketball players were found to have effective functioning in three EI domains: self-awareness (52.9%) self-management (61.8%), social awareness (58.8%), and relationship management (47.1%). Some of the basketball players, albeit less than the majority, also exhibited enhanced skills for self-awareness (2.9%), self-management (17.6%), social awareness (26.5%), and relationship management (32.4%).

Some basketball players showed lower scores in the four EI domains exhibited areas for enrichment for self-awareness (44.1%), self-management (20.6%), social awareness (14.7%), and relationship management (20.6%).

In general, the result indicates that most athletes involved in open-skill sport had EI scores that fall within the effective functioning or enhanced skill levels. But there are many athletes who were found to exhibit areas for enhancement with respect to the four EI domains. The most important EI domain for improvement is Self-Awareness.

Table (2) Frequency Distribution of Basketball Athletes Based on EI Effectiveness.

EI DOMAIN	AREA FOR ENRICHMENT	EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING	ENHANCED SKILLS
Self-Awareness	15 (44.1%)	18 (52.9%)	1 (2.9%)
Self-Management	7 (20.6%)	21 (61.8%)	6 (17.6%)
Social Awareness	5 (14.7%)	20 (58.8%)	9 (26.5%)
Relationship Management	7 (20.6%)	16 (47.1%)	11 (32.4%)

Analysis on Sports Performance of Basketball Athletes

The perceived performance level of the athletes in open-skill sports was determined based on self- and coach-rating. Table-7 shows that basketball players scored slightly higher in most of the game indicators based on their self-rating. (μ =3.34with SD = ±0.50).

Table (3) Perceived Mean (M ± SD) Level of Sports Performance of Basketball Athletes.

STATEMENT INDICATORS		SELF ASSESSMENT
1.	Ability to beat the defender regularly with both hands.	3.05 ± .98
2.	Ability to go either direction on the dribble.	3.41 ± 1.15
3.	Ability to choose the best type of pass (e.g., bounce, chest, overhead).	3.50 ± .90
4.	Ability to complete a no look or quick pass to an open teammate.	2.94 ± 1.10
5.	Aggressively move while in the court.	3.50 ± 1.18
6.	Beats the defender and moves easily towards the goal.	3.29± 1.00
7.	Exhibits full knowledge of the game, including mastery of violations.	3.47±1.11
8.	Exhibits excellence in shooting form and makes shots from all ranges.	3.26±1.08
9.	Displays exemplary shooting skill while being closely guarded.	3.21±1.12
10.	Ability to interrupt the opponent's shots offensively or defensively.	3.76±1.16
	General Mean	3.34±0.50

Adjectival Interpretations: [1.0] – Never; [2.0±0.99] – Rarely; [3.0±0.99] – Occasionally; [4.0±0.99] – Frequently; [5.0] – Always

Analysis on Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Sports Performance of Basketball Athletes

Table (4) Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Sport Performance Assessment by Players.

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Beta	t	Sig	VIF
	B	Std. Error				
Constant	2.208	.459		4.413	.034	
Self-Awareness	.037	.123	.052	.299	.767	1.248
Self-Management	.125	.139	.195	.900	.375	1.936
Social Awareness	-.145	.113	-.315	-1.287	.208	2.457
Relationship Management	.365**	.143	.578	2.56	.016	2.096
R			.542			
R Square			.293			
Adjusted R Square			.196			
F Value			3.012**			
Durbin Watson			2.203			

*** Significant at 1%. ** Significant at 5%, and *Significant at 10% (Dependent Variable: Sport Performance)

The relationship between the Basketball athletes' EI and SP was examined in Spearman's correlation (Table-4). The R squared value is 0.293, indicating that approximately 29.3% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables in the model. The adjusted R square is 0.196, suggesting that some of the predictors may not be contributing much to the model. The F-value is 3.012, which is used to test the overall significance of the model. In this case, the F-value suggests that the model is statistically significant. The constant term (intercept) is 2.208. This is the value of the dependent variable when all independent variables are zero. The unstandardized coefficient (B) is 0.037, and the standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.052. The t-value is 0.299, and the p-value (Sig) is 0.767, indicating that self-awareness is not a statistically significant predictor of the dependent variable. Additionally, the VIF is 1.248, suggesting low multicollinearity with other independent variables. The unstandardized coefficient (B) is 0.125, and the standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.195. The t-value is 0.900, and the p-value (Sig) is 0.375, indicating that self-management is not a statistically significant predictor of the dependent variable. The VIF is 1.936, which shows low multicollinearity. The unstandardized coefficient (B) is -0.145, and the standardized coefficient (Beta) is -0.315. The t-value is -1.287, and the p-value (Sig) is 0.208, indicating that social awareness is not a statistically significant predictor of the dependent variable. The VIF is 2.457, which is relatively high and suggests some multicollinearity with other independent variables. The unstandardized coefficient (B) is 0.365, and the standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.578. The t-value is 2.560, and the p-value (Sig) is 0.016, indicating that relationship management is a statistically significant predictor of the dependent variable at a significance level of 0.05. The VIF is 2.096, which is moderate. The Durbin-Watson statistic is used to test for autocorrelation in the residuals

(errors) of the regression model. A value close to 2 (such as 2.203) indicates that there is no significant autocorrelation.

In summary, it appears that "Relationship Management" is the only variable in our model that is a statistically significant predictor of the dependent variable, as indicated by its low p-value (Sig). The other variables do not appear to have a statistically significant impact on the dependent variable in this analysis. Additionally, the relatively high VIF for "Social Awareness," suggests multicollinearity with other independent variables in the model.

Findings and Discussions

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to an individual's ability to handle and to accurately identify and understand his own and others' emotions (Kulkarni et al., 2009). Moreover, one's EI is a measure of one's ability to regulate one's own emotions, towards making good decisions and to act effectively in each situation (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Bar-On (1997) defined EI as the person's adaptive mechanisms to effectively cope with the immediate surroundings and become successful in dealing with the changing environmental demands, by understanding oneself and that of others. In evaluating the EI skills of the person, (Goleman D. , 1998) has provided the basic elements which include self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Thus, the EI an individual constitutes one's competencies, skills, and abilities that are essentially linked to his behavior and subsequent actions (Faltas, 2017). To date, several studies have been conducted to evaluate the potential role of EI to the individual's performance in various types of organizations including corporate workplaces, healthcare systems, and academic settings. In sports psychology, EI is considered a significant factor that influences sport performance (Kopp & Jekauc, The influence of emotional intelligence on performance in competitive sports: a metal analytical investigation, 2018). The present study examined the perceived EI level of athletes in **Yangon University of Economics**, involved in open-skill (basketball) sport. The athletes' EI levels were measured in terms of four EI domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. In general, results indicate that the EI level of open-skill athletes, based on their personal rating, did not vary much with respect to the four EI domains. It appeared that both open-skill (basketball players) athletes often perceived themselves as having high EI levels. Most of the athletes also exhibited effective functioning or enhanced skill level in all four EI domains. This result is like the findings of (Mohzan et al. 2013), showing that college students enrolled in a University in Malaysia, had high levels of EI in terms of appraisal, understanding, and regulation of their own as well as of the others' emotions. Similar findings have been reported as well among semi-professional Spanish athletes in different modalities, indicating that the respondents generally exhibited high levels of EI with respect to emotional perception, management, and utilization (Castro-Sánchez, et al., 15-16 March 2018). It has been postulated that individuals with high EI level are more likely to accept and handle both pleasant and unpleasant feelings (Mohzan et al., 2013), allowing them to cope with pressures, occasional failures, and disturbing experiences (Pfeiffer, 2001). In this regard, responsive motivational programs aimed at improving the EI levels of individuals are warranted in such cases, to improve their well-being. Indeed, optimal performance of athletes in

their sports has been found to be significantly associated with their superior emotional experiences as a function of high EI (Lane, et al., 2010).

Significant correlations were found between the average SP scores of the open-skill athletes (basketball players) and their EI levels in all four EI domains. This result indicates that as the EI level of basketball players increases, their SP level also improves. Several studies have also examined the relationship of EI and SP among athletes and reported conflicting results. Consistent in only with the Relationship Management domain, the findings of the present study, Crombie et al. (2009) also demonstrated that the EI level of a cricket team was positively associated with the SP level. It was found that EI significantly predicts the team's SP, suggesting that in general, EI level contributes to the success of teams involved in complex sports such as cricket. Similarly, the study of Zizzi et al. (2003) showed that EI level was positively correlated with the SP among collegiate baseball teams, suggesting that EI is a significant SP indicator. However, in contrast to results of the present study, whereby significant association was not established between the other three EI levels and SP score of the open-skill athletes (basketball), the study of (Petrides et al. 2006) demonstrated a positive relationship between trait EI and ballet dancing ability ratings. The aforesaid reports support the idea in sport psychology that any competitive sport is an emotion-laden environment (Kopp & Jekauc, 2018), which continuously subjects the athletes to various types of stress and emotional challenges (Meyer & Fletcher, 2007).

Therefore, the athletes' SP in each sport is significantly influenced by relationships and interactions, both as direct functions of emotions (Friesen et al., 2012;McCarthy, 2011). This idea is supported by the study of Saadati et al. (2014), whereby a negative correlation was revealed between the athletes' EI level and burnout experience. Indeed, Sadri and Janani (2015) supposed that higher EI level results in better self-regulation among athletes.

Meanwhile, the findings of Laborde et al. (2014) indicated that trait EI levels of tennis players are unrelated to their serve performance. Another report also indicated no significant relationship between the EI and SP of ice hockey athletes (Perlini & Halverson, 2006). These contradictory findings warrant additional research work, to establish further the apparent connection between EI and SP.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the open-skill (basketball players)) YU Eco athletes often exhibit high EI levels in relationship management EI domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Most of the athletes exhibited EI scores within the effective functioning or enhanced skill level. Many athletes fall in the area for enrichment, especially in Self-Awareness.

Significant positive relationships between the SP scores of basketball players and their EI (Relationship Management) levels were revealed. Hence, it can be deduced that higher Relationship Management level was significantly associated with improved SP among athletes involved in closed-skill sports like basketball. Various motivational programs for the open-skill athletes may be executed to enhance their EI level, to promote prime performance in their chosen sports.

YU Eco athletes should be trained for improved team spirit, especially for basketball. Events and activities to promote Teamwork and Cooperation should be encouraged for more Relationship Management improvement.

Limitations and Needs for Further Research

When conducting a study on the relationship between perceived emotional intelligence and sport performance among Yangon University of Economics basketball athletes, it is important to acknowledge and address potential limitations. These limitations can affect the validity and generalizability of the study's findings. Here are some potential limitations to consider:

If the sample size was small and not representative of the broader population of basketball athletes, the study's results may lack generalizability. A larger and more diverse sample would improve the study's external validity.

Perceived emotional intelligence was often measured through self-report questionnaires or assessments. Participants may not always provide accurate or honest responses, which could introduce response bias.

This study used a cross-sectional design, it could only capture a snapshot of the relationship between perceived emotional intelligence and sport performance at a specific point in time. Longitudinal studies would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how these variables evolve over time.

While the study may establish a correlation between perceived emotional intelligence and sport performance, it may not definitively prove causation. Other factors, such as physical fitness or coaching, could also influence performance.

External factors like personal life stressors, academic pressures, or team dynamics could impact both perceived emotional intelligence and sport performance.

By acknowledging and addressing these limitations to the best of our ability, we can enhance the rigor and reliability of our study's findings and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between perceived emotional intelligence and sport performance among Yangon University of Economics basketball athletes.

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