

## **INFLUENCES OF HOCKEY COACHES, TEAM COHESION AND MOTIVATIONAL INTENSITY ON THE PERFORMANCE OF PAKISTANI FIELD HOCKEY PLAYERS**

**SAEED JAVED, ABD RAHIM BIN MOHD SHARIFF & SHANMUGA NATHAN**

Faculty of Sports Science and Coaching, Sultan Idris Education University, Perak, Malaysia

### **ABSTRACT**

The paper represented the findings of a superior study that highlights the lack of hockey coaches, team cohesiveness, motivational intensity and their influences on the performance of Pakistani national field hockey players. Field hockey recognized as Pakistan's national game (sport) with three Olympic and four world cup titles on its credit but no effort has been made to find out the factors which have turned Pakistan (as team) from the status of a giant into a pygmy from the last two decades. The problem to be addressed in current study was the lack of sufficient coaching structure, lack of team cohesiveness and lack of motivational intensity among players. A sample of 68 national field hockey players from four national departments affiliated with Pakistan Hockey Federation was chosen as respondents. The findings highlighted that current performance of national field hockey players did not compete to the factual requirements of international level and proposed certain alterations in current coaching structure, team cohesiveness and motivational intensity. Recommendations have been made to raise the excellence, relevance, and legitimacy of coaching structure as well as in team regarding cohesion and motivation with players' performance.

**KEYWORDS:** Coaching, Cohesiveness, Motivation, Performance, Achievements, National Players

### **INTRODUCTION**

Ancient Olympics have a very long history, began from 776 B.C. Girginov (2010) explained that at the 1894 congress meeting in Paris, the decision was reserved that the first modern Olympic Games to be apprehended in Athens in 1896 (p.130). However, Modern Olympic Games have been started since 1896, are organized after every four years regularly, except, I and II (1940 & 1944) World War. Field Hockey included for the first time in IV Olympic Games 1908 London and Great Britain (England) won the first title of Field Hockey. Field hockey is one of the popular well known sports not only in Asia but also played in all continents of the world. It is a team sport of 11 players on each side, in which, players struggle in the same field of battle while playing on Astroturf. Asghar (2011) describes that field hockey is known as an intermittent sport wherein players challenge to their opponent competitors at their same action of play. Elferink-Gemser, Visscher, Lemmink, and Mulder (2007) explain that the physical demands of the field hockey have enlarged greater than before due to both amendments in the rules and playing surface. Field hockey has become superb and fastest sport of the world due to the latest changes in its academic and practical structure.

According to the first constitution of 1947, field hockey is declared Pakistan's national sport. After the emergence of Pakistan, both the teams (Pakistan & India) have performed terrifically and have been healthy challengers in the final of any international hockey event till 1984. Pakistan dominated World Field Hockey during the 1980s, when they were the Asian, Olympic, and World champions. However, there has been a sharp decline in the performance of Team Pakistan since the time of mid 1990s and the Pakistani team has not won any significant event at an international level. Meulmana, Berger, Zande, Kok, Ottevanger, and Crucq (2012) point out that particularly new hockey players' feel trouble during working out the skills, and therefore, they have no experience of victory required raising the value of the training.

Thiel, Tremaynea, and James (2012) describe that the particular sport demands expertise in possessing the ball, rapidity stick, striking supremacy as well as quickness in dribbling.

Pakistani nationals have had tremendous performance and achievements since 1994 and won the world titles of the sport many times in Olympics, World Cups, Champions Trophies, Asian Games, as well as Sultan Azlan Shah Field Hockey Tournaments (see Table 1). At the moment, field hockey could not win any mega title since 1994. This is the worst ever time with Pakistan hockey that, even, the four times world cup winner team could not qualify for the 13<sup>th</sup> world cup, going to be held in Netherlands 2014. However, players have been playing under severe criticism due to not winning any significant title for the last two decades. The literature shows that there occur numerous socio-interactional and psycho-sociological factors such as coach-player interactional factor, team cohesion among players and players' motivational intensity factor. These are the factors which reveal why Pakistani field hockey players are not performing well as compared to the past performance.

**Table 1: Pakistan Hockey Team overall Achievements in International Tournaments**

Event(s)	Champion Year
Olympic Games	1960, 1968, & 1984
World Cup	1971, 1978, 1982, & 1994
Champions Trophy	1978, 1980, & 1994
Asian Games	1958, 1962, 1970, 1974, 1978, 1982, 1990, & 2010
Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey Tournament	1999, 2000, & 2003

The poor performance of the team players not only brought about the bad name but put the national sport under severe criticism also. The emerging scenario of the present has made it an obligation for the students of national sport to explore the realities on ground. Purpose of the current paper is to examine the factors related to the decline in players' performance in Pakistani Field Hockey on the national and international arena.

As discussed in literature, social issues may influence the performance of national hockey players such as socio-interactional factor. Is this factor comparable or different from others? The study will investigate the causes of decline in players' performance of Pakistani sport through this socio-interactional.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Sherwani (2013, December 10), Pakistani hockey has been facing with severe decline for the last two decades. According to Bhatti (2013, August 31) and Yaqoob (2013, August 31), Pakistan hockey grieved a main shock once four times title winner remained unsuccessful for its participation in the World Cup 2014 (Zaman, 2013, December 15).

The major problem faced by Pakistani field hockey is lack of proper coaching structure. Coaches have no scientific drills, different philosophy and styles of play (Zaman, 2013, December 10). A hockey player is generally practiced by two/three coaches before selecting in national team, a lot of things remained uncertain in his mind creating many misgivings and misperceptions regarding coaching. Due to this, there is no stability in players' performance and this is the core cause for the downfall in performance diagram (Zaman, 2013, December 10). However, Pakistani hockey players have also serious challenges in the region of coaching that might be the cause of decrease in national players' performance.

Another foremost problem tackled by the Pakistani national players is team cohesiveness. Asghar (2011) describes that performance is associated with team exertion and well mixture of the team and all the players of Pakistani hockey need to require solid cohesiveness among them to perform well. Kanchan, Singh and Tarandeep (2012) explain that

team cohesion is really a powerful procedure in which the team has a tendency to stay with each other as well as combined to chase the objectives for the satisfaction with the touching requirements associated with team players. Calvo, Marcos, Miguel, and Oliva (2010) explain that the players who recognized higher task cohesion are identified to distinguish as a whole greater efficiency within their team.

Motivational intensity is one of key problem within the hockey players' performance in Pakistan. The sport may not get success without the particular amount of mentally and psychologically treatment of the players. According to Bhatti (2013, August 31), sport psychologist can provide assistance for the national team with mental and psychological reintegration and promotion to manage with the current hockey downfall in Pakistan. Asghar (2011) indicates as the drive is stronger as the targets will be easier to achieve. Webb (2008) explained that a young player's motivation is improved by generating an optimistic atmosphere. However, surroundings wherein coaches' reliably practice strengthening methods keep players motivated.

The AstroTurf was introduced in field hockey in 1970s that altered the speed and style of the sport (Spencer, Lawrence, Rechichi, Bishop, Dawson & Goodman, 2004). The changes in rules also have been presented to adjust the sport. Furthermore, two extreme essential alterations in mid 1990s have been appeared; first, permission of countless substitutions and secondly, elimination the offside rule from the field hockey. Psychological skills and performance level has a strong relationship to achieve the optimum performance as well as coach-player relationship is extreme essential for the better progress of young players (Asghar, 2011). The win-lose trait of sport made aggravate aching outlooks of indignity, grief, and inadequacy within the player (Sagar & Jowett, 2012). Field hockey needs the expertise in possessing the ball, rapidity stick, striking supremacy as well as speediness in dribbling (Thiel et al., 2012). The upmost significant fruitful factor of a coach is to assist players to develop their sporty skills in an extensive variety of goals from successive improvement and elementary expertise for their additional particular corporeal, technical, strategic, and mental groundwork (Heidary, Emami, Eskandaripour, Saiah, Mohamadi & Shahbazi, 2011).

## **METHODOLOGY**

Because, active field hockey players of sports institutions who have been participated in National Games or National Championship were only eligible to participate in current study. Relying on this specific purpose, the sampling of the respondents of the study is considered purposive sampling. Only number of sixty eight (68) national hockey players responded and willingly took part in filling the questionnaires while 100 questionnaires were distributed. All the national hockey players were belonging to the sports institutions named Pakistan Steel Mill (PSM), Port Qasim Authority (PQA), Higher Education Commission (HEC), and Khyber Pakhtoon Khawah (KPK) Province. These four hockey departments are national departments which are affiliated with Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF).

The adopted and modified questionnaire was used for data collection. The adopted questionnaire is comprised on five sections: A, B, C, D, E. Section A was comprised of demographic information having six (6) questions. Section B has 21 questions that used to test the professional skills of field hockey players regarding their performance. Section C consisted of 30 questions to highlight the characteristics, expertise, and leadership of hockey coaches. Section D consisted of nine (9) questions to focus the personal factors, and team factors of cohesion. Lastly, Section E consisted of 18 questions emphasis the goals for practice, practice resources, and reinforcement for achievements of motivational intensity. The whole questionnaire consisted of 84 items overall.

Section B comprised 21 questions and was targeted to collect information about Pakistani national field hockey players' performance. Five sub skills were distributed into two portions such as tactical skills (4 items), interpersonal skills

(4 items), and communicational skills (4 items) calculated through questionnaire while technical skills (5 items) and fitness capabilities (4 items) were tested in the field of play by three hockey experts (ex-Olympians). Answers were noted down in Likert scale under five dimensions of rank. Mean scores indicated following answers for the questions in the questionnaire: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Average, Agree, Strongly agree.

Section C contained thirty (30) questions in which participants found out the influence of hockey coaches during interacting with players. These qualities were tested by various question items. Respondents were inquired to find the best standing of every item. It comprised three portions as characteristics, expertise, and leadership of hockey coaches. Questions 1-10 represented coach characteristics, 11-20 coach expertise, and 21- 30 coach leadership. Answers were collected through coded items in Likert scale. Mean scores represented the answers for the items in the questionnaire: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Average, Agree, Strongly agree.

Section D consisted of nine (9) questions to highlight the personal factors (1-5 Questions), and team factors (6-9 Questions) of team cohesion construct. Mean scores represented the answers for the items in the questionnaire: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Average, Agree, Strongly agree.

While section E comprised of 18 questions focus the goals for practice (1-9 Questions), practice resources (10-13 Questions), and reinforcement for achievements (14-18 Questions) of motivational intensity construct. Mean scores represented the answers for the items in the questionnaire: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Average, Agree, Strongly agree.

Whole questionnaire consisted of 84 items overall. Coded answers were statistically planned and examined through SPSS-21. The simple statistical technique "Mean Score" has been used in investigating the overall collected data.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Table 2: Performance of Hockey Players**

S.No.	Item	Mean Score
<b>Technical Skills</b>		
1	Dribbling the ball	3.00
2	Passing the ball	2.62
3	Receiving the ball	2.82
4	Hitting the ball	2.60
5	Scoop the ball	2.84
<b>Tactical Skills</b>		
6	The players pay specific attention to correcting technically and tactically mistakes.	3.01
7	The players play according to the tactics of the game.	2.82
8	Every player individually keeps an eye on to utilize tactical skills during playing.	2.88
9	The players know better what should be done in every situation during playing.	2.91
<b>Interpersonal Skills</b>		
10	The players correlate among themselves during total part of the game.	2.81
11	The players try their own way to coordinate with during game.	3.03
12	Every player knows how to use interpersonal codes during game.	2.84
13	The players trust upon each others during playing.	2.88
<b>Communicational Skills</b>		
14	The players use maximum communication throughout playing.	2.87
15	The players verbally and signally communicate among themselves during game.	2.91
16	The quantity of communication during playing among the players is good.	2.69
17	The quality of communication during playing among the players is good.	2.84
<b>Fitness Capabilities</b>		
18	Interval Shuttle Test	2.81
19	Linear Speed Test	2.87
20	Agility Test	2.66
21	Endurance Capacity Test	2.62

Questions 1-5 represent technical skills that come under performance of ‘hockey players were supposed as initial practically skillful and learning items. Generally, players liked to learn dribbling the ball in field of play (question 1, Mean value 3.00). Furthermore maximum mean values showed that they adequately involved in learning of ‘dribbling the ball’ in practice or game. But a least mean value proposed that players were weak in hitting the ball. Findings showed that less consideration was given to ‘hitting the ball’ by players (Mean value 2.60, question 4).

Questions 6-9 stood for tactical skills, the outcomes showed that ‘every player pay attention to correcting technically and tactically mistakes’ (Mean score 3.01, question 6). Least mean score purposed somewhat importance to be specified (Mean score 2.82, question 7) to ‘play according to the tactics of the game by the players’.

Likewise, questions 10-13 showed interpersonal skills among players, uppermost mean score (Mean score 3.03) was assumed (question 11) to ‘players’ try their own way to coordinate during game’. Results showed that most items have below than average representing interpersonal skills of players not sufficient. Lowest mean score (Mean values 2.81) was assumed (question 10) to ‘players correlate among themselves during total part of the game’ was set smallest preference.

Questions 14-17 stood for communicational skills, ‘players’ verbally and signally communicate among themselves during game’ counted highest value (Mean value 2.91, question 15). Least value was assumed to (Mean score 2.69, question 16) for describing ‘quantity of communication during playing among the players is good’.

Questions 18-21 represented the fitness capabilities of players, linear peed test was calculated highest value (Mean score 2.87, question 19) shows that players’ reported ability is below than average means they are weaker in ‘fitness’. While lowest score was assumed (Mean value 2.62, question 21) representing lessen ‘endurance capacity’ in players.

**Table 3: Hockey Coaches**

S.No.	Item	Mean Score
<b>Coach Characteristics</b>		
1	The coach effectively communicates with players.	3.51
2	The coach understands the personal issues facing the players under his supervision.	3.47
3	The coach is good teacher.	3.31
4	The coach knows how to motivate and encourage his players.	3.63
5	The coach is trust-worthy.	3.40
6	The coach is flexible.	3.24
7	The coach is quicker in his ability to solve problems successfully.	3.44
8	The coach creates a positive training environment.	3.32
9	The coach demonstrates a high commitment level to their profession.	3.37
10	The coach consistently produces successful athletes and teams.	3.28
<b>Coach Expertise</b>		
11	The coach has an advanced level of technical and tactical knowledge of their sport.	3.54
12	The coach has an advanced ability to design training programs.	3.47
13	The coach has an advanced level of knowledge regarding sport sciences.	3.56
14	The coach has exposed to early leadership opportunities in players through sport play.	3.43
15	The coach has competitive experience as a player in the sport.	3.49
16	The coach has competitive experience at the most elite level of competition in the sport he coach.	3.60
17	The coach takes part in self-directed learning such as reading books, journals, and watching videos.	3.53
18	The coach regularly consults and learns from other expert coaches.	3.41
19	The coach has an official coaching qualification or certification.	3.47
20	The coach consistently attends coaching conferences.	3.53
<b>Coach Leadership</b>		
21	The coach shares the players in decision making.	3.34
22	The coach encourages close and informal relationships with players.	3.47

**Table 3: Contd.,**

23	The coach encourages players to make suggestions for ways to conduct practices.	3.32
24	The coach asks for the opinion of the players on important coaching matters.	3.35
25	The coach plans relatively independent of the players.	3.37
26	The coach refuses to compromise on a point.	3.29
27	The coach keeps reserved from the players.	3.41
28	The coach helps the team members to settle their conflicts.	3.38
29	The coach helps players with their personal problems.	3.26
30	The coach looks out for the personal welfare of the players.	3.43

Overall view of the players is that hockey coach is most important or central person in a team. They preferred to coach characteristics that ‘coach knows how to motivate and encourage his players’ under his supervision (question 4, Mean value 3.63) and least weight have been assumed to (question 6, Mean value 3.24) ‘coach is flexible with his players’.

Players commented about coach expertise illustrated that coach has competitive experience at the most elite level of competition in the sport he coach (question 16, Mean value 3.60). Minimum weight was assumed to ‘coach regularly consults and learns from other expert coaches’ (question 18, Mean value 3.41).

Players’ views on coach leadership illustrated from questions 21 to 30. It was found that coach encourages close and informal relationships with players (question 22, Mean value 3.47). Minimum value was noted for ‘coach helps players with their personal problems’ (Mean value 3.26, question 29).

**Table 4: Team Cohesion**

No.	Item	Mean Score
<b>Personal Factors</b>		
1	This team gives me enough opportunities to improve my own performance	4.31
2	I am happy with my team’s level of desire to win	4.32
3	My approach to playing is the same as my teammates	4.24
4	For me, the team’s success is more important than my own success	4.29
5	We all share the same commitment to our team’s goals	4.24
<b>Team Factors</b>		
6	As a team, we are all on the same page	3.81
7	As a team, I like the way we work together	3.79
8	As a team, we are united	4.04
9	As a team, we like the way we work together	3.74

Overall view of the players is that team cohesion plays most important or central part in a team. They preferred to personal factors that ‘I am happy with my team’s level of desire to win’ (question 2, Mean value 4.32) and Least weight has been assumed to (questions 3 & 5, Mean value 4.24) in Table 4.

Players commented about team factors illustrated that ‘as a team, we are united’ (question 8, Mean value 4.04). However, minimum weight was assumed to ‘as a team, we like the way we work together’ (question 9, Mean value 3.74).

**Table 5: Motivational Intensity**

No.	Item	Mean Score
<b>Goals for Practice</b>		
1	I feel excitement when I am really involved in the practice.	3.46
2	I do practice for the status of being a good player.	3.44
3	I often ask myself; I can seem to achieve the goals during practice that I set for myself.	3.51
4	I do practice discovering new training techniques in my sport.	3.46
5	Because I feel a lot of personal satisfaction while learning certain difficult training techniques.	3.54

**Table 5: Contd.,**

6	I feel pleasure while learning training techniques that I have never tried before.	3.46
7	I do practice while improving some of my weak points.	3.51
8	Practice is a good way to learn lots of new things which could be useful to me during game.	3.47
9	I enrich my strengths and reduce my weaknesses during practice.	3.43
<b>Practice Resources</b>		
10	The players normally participate in ongoing sport training programs.	3.34
11	The department provides training focused on team building and teamwork skills training.	3.31
12	The coach initiates and provides various kinds of training and development to their players.	3.28
13	The department has good coaching clinics to support their players.	3.32
<b>Reinforcement for achievements</b>		
14	The coach compliments a player for good performance in front of other players.	3.53
15	The coach expresses appreciation when players perform well.	3.49
16	The coach criticises players when they particularly perform badly.	3.53
17	The department gives credit to players where it is due.	3.46
18	The department gives promotion as a reward to the players upon a good performance.	3.62

Field hockey players' views on goals for practice demonstrated from questions 1 to 9. It was found that 'because I feel a lot of personal satisfaction while learning certain difficult training techniques' (question 5, Mean value 3.54). Minimum value was noted for 'I enrich my strengths and reduce my weaknesses during practice' (Mean value 3.43, question 9) in Table 5.

National Players remarked about practice resources showed that 'the players normally participate in ongoing sport training programs' (question 10, Mean value 3.34). Minimum weight was assumed to 'the coach initiates and provides various kinds of training and development to their players' (question 12, Mean value 3.28).

Field hockey players' opinions on reinforcement for achievements confirmed within questions 14 to 18. It was originated that 'the department gives promotion as a reward to the players upon a good performance' (question 18, Mean value 3.62). Minimum value was found for 'the department gives credit to players where it is due' (Mean value 3.46, question 17) in Table 5.

## CONCLUSIONS

Visible leanings of the influence of hockey coaches, team cohesion, and motivational intensity on performance of field hockey players were described after investigating the collected data. A clear gap between results and real exercise of the influence of hockey coaches, team cohesion, and motivational intensity can be identified. Foremost objective was attained as the actual influences of hockey coaches, team cohesion, and motivational intensity were also identified in relations to field hockey players' performance. Results proposed that some changes are required in the existing structure of coaching and there is a gap between motivational intensity and performance of field hockey players but players had quite better understanding of team cohesion. Therefore, the subsequent suggestions and recommendations can be furthered dealt with the results.

The present structure of coaching might be advanced to encounter the actual performance requirements of hockey players and produced further reliable outcomes. The current structure does not cover extraordinary performance to impart the supposed items. Additional, it proposes that coaches need to be added more their expertise to improve technical skills and tactical skills, and utilize them to develop fitness capabilities of players to enhance performance. Furthermore, coaches need to recover their leadership abilities of developing interpersonal and communicational skills with providing guidelines

and directions. Available structure of hockey coaches is not sufficient to meet the supposed performance needs.

The existing level of motivational intensity could be advanced to meet the actual performance requirements of hockey players and produced more reliable outcomes. The current level does not cover extraordinary performance to impart the supposed items. Additional, it proposes that motivational intensity need to be added more through goals for practice, practice resources, and reinforcement for achievements to improve technical skills and tactical skills, and utilize them to develop fitness capabilities so that the performance of the players could be enhanced. Available level of motivational intensity is not sufficient to meet the supposed performance needs.

The current practice of technical skills does not adequate to meet required international standards of field hockey so as to increase the technical expertise of players. Therefore, further practices to be settled improving the technical expertise of players. Different theoretically activities to be planned to develop tactical skills of players on paper through meeting room lectures as well as in the field of play by qualified hockey coaches and experts. Players liked to improve their tactical skills by asking and answering questions during interchanges. The coaches can reduce the gap of interpersonal and communicational skills among players during practices and game. It was found that available structure does not pay any attention to interpersonal and communicational skills of the players. Players should be exposed to more chances of practice to learn how to make the performance well. It is supposed to develop characteristics, expertise, and leadership quality of coaching structure with the association of proposed mixture of players' requirements in shape of performance aptitudes.

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