

A Study of Task and Ego Goal Orientation of Gold Medal Winning Athletes of Sri Lanka

Perera D. S. L.¹

¹*Department of Sports Sciences and Physical Education, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka*

Abstract:

The task and ego goal orientation are important goal orientation perspectives. South Asian Games is the mini Olympic games in the South Asian sub-continent and track and field athletics sport is the most successful sport of Sri Lanka at the South Asian Games. However, Sri Lankan athletes topped the gold medal tally only twice in 1991 and 2019 in South Asian Games history. The present study was aimed to investigate the level of the task and ego goal orientation of gold medal-winning track and field athletes of Sri Lanka at 13th South Asian Games in 2019 and to assess any differences of sex towards the goal orientation of athletes. Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire were distributed online within 2 weeks of the conclusion of Games among the sample of 21 athletes and 20 responses were received (8 male and 12 female). Statistical analysis was carried out in SPSS Version 21. Data were normally distributed Cronbach alpha was .81. Participants were scored higher in ego orientation (3.81) compared to the task orientation (3.41). Women were recorded higher mean score in task orientation while men were recorded higher mean score in ego orientation respectively (3.48, 4.02). No statistical difference in sex was identified towards the goal orientation of athletes ($p > 0.05$). To conclude the study, it is important to increase the task orientation perspective of athletes to achieve greater performance in sports.

Keyword: *Sri Lanka Athletics, Sports psychology, South Asian Games, Task and Ego goal orientation, TESQ*

Date of Submission: 08-11-2020

Date of Acceptance: 21-11-2020

I. Introduction

The South Asian Games (SAG) is organized between the South Asian countries of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The inaugural games were held in the year 1984 and since then there had been 13 games organized. Track and Field "Athletics" is undoubtedly the most popular sport in any mega sports event. Moreover, Athletics is the most prominent Olympic sport in Sri Lanka. There 2 Olympic medals won by Sri Lanka and both of them were achieved by track field athletes in years of 1948 and 2000. At the Asian Games, Sri Lankan athletes have won 10 gold medals out of total 11 since 1951. When considering the SAG at the end of 13th SAG, Sri Lanka has won 260 gold medals in total since 1984 and 45% (116) of overall gold medals is won by track and field athletes. However, although 45% of gold medals won by track and field athletes, Sri Lanka only topped the athletics medal table at the SAG only in 1991 and 2019 in the history over other participating countries. The 1991 Games was held in Sri Lanka while 2019 Games was held in Nepal. Accordingly, achievement in 2019 was significant due to many factors. It was the first time Sri Lanka topped the athletics medal table since 1991, and also it was the first time achieving the top place outside the country and it was the highest gold medal count since 1991 from athletics. Hence, it is important to assess the goal perspective of the gold medal-winning track and field athletes of Sri Lanka who contributed to repeat the history after 28 years.

Similar to physical capability, mental capability also contributes to the athletes' success. Mental health enables the athlete to perform at an optimal level. Various psychological factors affect such as goal orientation, concentration and anxiety etc. to achieve the athletic goal. The mentality must be well controlled to produce the best performance. Great mental health is required to control the intensity of the competition. In most instances nowadays differences in motor skills in athletes are very marginal comparing to each other. Therefore, mental preparation for athletes before and during the competition is very important (Majzub and Muhammad, 2011).

Achievement motivation theories suggest two major goal perspectives operate in achievement contexts in sport as a task orientation and ego orientation. These two perspectives replicate differences in which sports settings able to make them better competent (Duda, 2016). Goal perspectives of Task orientation and Ego orientation are a great way to help the athlete to achieve their ideal performance. Task orientation shall explain as the athletes' interest in mastering the skill or task. In the task orientation athlete's feel competent with their performance. Task-oriented, task mastery or personal improvement reflect high competence and subjective

success. Ego Orientated athletes have always compared themselves with similar athletes base their success of opponents (Nicholls, 1984; Walling, Duda and Chi, 1993; Castillo *et al.*, 2010; Duda, 2016). Ego orientation was a positive predictor of the view that sports involvement should enhance once self - esteem and social status (Nicholls, 1984). However, there is another upcoming goal orientation named avoidance orientation. The avoidance orientation is characterized as a need to try to succeed in order to avoid looking incompetent (Jagacinski and Strickland, 2000).

II. Methodology

The study was conducted under a cross-sectional survey study design. The main objective of the study was to investigate the level of the task and ego goal orientation of the gold medal-winning track and field athletes of Sri Lanka at the 13th South Asian Games held in Kathmandu, Nepal in the year 2019. Assessing the differences in sex towards the goal orientation was the minor objective. The population of the study was gold medalists in athletics at South Asian Games of Sri Lanka team (n=21) including 9 male athletes and 12 female athletes. They were selected under the selective population sampling method. “Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire (TEOSQ)” was shared online among the population within two weeks of completion of the Games in December 2019. TEOSQ consisted of 13 questions which included 7 questions on task orientation while 6 questions on ego orientation. TEOSQ was organised according to 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree (Figure 1). Twenty responds were received and only 1 male athlete did not respond to the questionnaire. Statistical analysis was carried out by using SPSS version 21.

III. Result and Discussion

Data were normally distributed and the internal consistency of data was assessed by utilizing Cronbach alpha (.81).

Overall, the mean chronological age of the participants was 26.14 years. The mean chronological ages of males and females were 27.55 and 24.73 years respectively.

The mean scores of overall task goal orientation were 3.41 and overall ego goal orientation was 3.81 out of 5. According to meanscores obtained it is evident that Sri Lankan gold medal-winning track and field athletes were higher in ego goal orientation compared to the mean task goal orientation scores. Previous studies on goal orientation of athletes had discussed that mean task goal orientation scores were higher in athletes compared to their mean ego orientation scores (Jagacinski and Strickland, 2000; Ryska, 2003; Majzub and Muhammad, 2011). A study in Croatia mentioned that task goal orientation as the most desirable orientation for formulating achievement goals in sport (Barić and Horga, 2007). Besides individual differences in goal orientations suggests that there are other important factors which impact whether a person is a task or ego involved at any one point in time. These additional influences include the Ego orientation has been associated with greater depression and less reported enjoyment after a loss, and greater somatic and cognitive anxiety (Walling, Duda and Chi, 1993).

The female and male athletes recorded a mean value of 3.48 and 3.32 for task goal orientation respectively (Figure 2). The female athletes scored a mean value of 3.67 and male athletes scored a mean value of 4.02 for ego goal orientation respectively (Figure 2). It revealed that female athletes were more task goal-oriented than male athletes and male athletes were more ego goal-oriented compared to female athletes. However, according to the statistical analysis, there was no statistical difference in athlete's sex towards the goal orientation was recorded ($p > 0.05$) according to the two-sample t-test. A similar result mentioning no difference in sex towards the athletes' goal orientation was obtained in the United States of America (Treasure and Roberts, 1994). However, another study carried out in Japanese sports context noted sex differences in goal orientation among athletes ($p < 0.05$) (Wakayama, Watanabe, Inomata, 2002). Therefore, it is evident that different results were recorded in sexual differences of goal orientation of athletes in different study settings.

Studies conducted in Canada, Japan and the United States of America reported that females scored higher for task goal orientation similar to the present study than the males' athletes (Li, Harmer and Acock, 1996; Jagacinski and Strickland, 2000; Wakayama, Watanabe, Inomata, 2002). Athletes high in task orientation invest more effort in improving technique and ideal performance (Gregg, O and Hall, 2016). Female athletes of Sri Lanka national team won 11 gold medals at 13th SAG while male athletes won 4 gold medals. With that, it can be proved that higher task orientation can lead to better success in sports achievements despite the other factors affecting to athlete's performance including the level of competitions of the opponents, climate, experience etc.

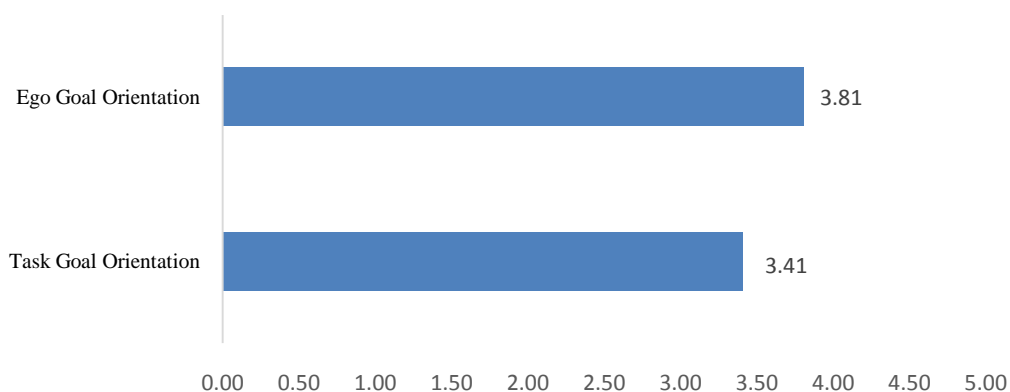


Figure 1 Overall mean scores of Ego Goal Orientation and Task Goal Orientation

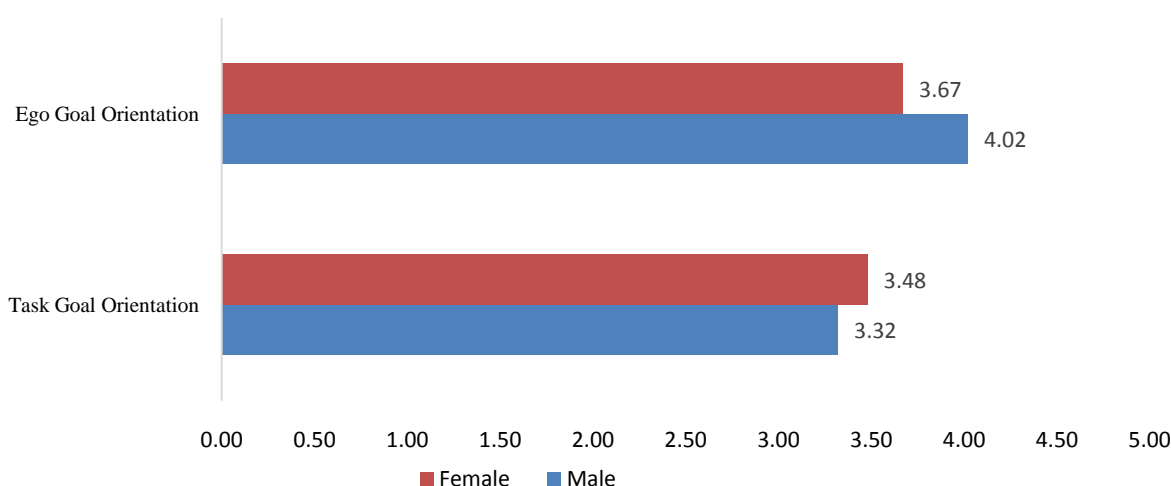


Figure 2 Mean Goal Orientation scores according to the athlete's sex

IV. Conclusion

Task and Ego goal orientation are important goal perspectives in achievement context in sports. The current study presented with gold medal-winning athletes in track and field who represented Sri Lanka national team at 13th SAG held in Kathmandu Nepal December 2019. According to the findings received from the TEOSQ, overall the participants were recorded higher in ego goal orientation over the task goal orientation (3.81>3.41). When assessing the athlete's sex, female athletes were scored higher compared to male athletes in task orientation (3.48>3.32) while male athletes were more ego-oriented compared to the female athletes (4.02>3.67). Task orientation is considered to be the most important according to the goal achievement theories. For greater achievements, both male and female athletes should master the skills rather comparing them with others. Increased sample size and different sports are recommended to carry out similar studies to understand the achievement goal orientation of Sri Lankan athletes to achieve better success in future events.

References

- [1] Barić, R. and Horga, S. (2007) 'Psychometric Properties of the Croatian Version of Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire (Cteosq).', *Kinesiology*, 38(2), pp. 135–140.
- [2] Castillo, I. et al. (2010) 'The task and ego orientation in sport questionnaire: Testing for measurement invariance and latent mean differences in Spanish and Portuguese adolescents', *International Journal of Testing*, 10(1), pp. 21–32. doi: 10.1080/15305050903352107.
- [3] Duda, J. L. (2016) 'Relationship between Task and Ego Orientation and the Perceived Purpose of Sport among High School Athletes', *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 11(3), pp. 318–335. doi: 10.1123/jsep.11.3.318.
- [4] Gregg, M. J., O, J. and Hall, C. R. (2016) 'Examining the relationship between athletes' achievement goal orientation and ability to employ imagery', *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*. Elsevier Ltd, 24, pp. 140–146. doi: 10.1016/j.psychsport.2016.01.006.
- [5] Jagacinski, C. M. and Strickland, O. J. (2000) 'Task and ego orientation: The role of goal orientations in anticipated affective reactions to achievement outcomes', *Learning and Individual Differences*, 12(2), pp. 189–208. doi: 10.1016/S1041-6080(01)00037-1.
- [6] Li, F., Harmer, P. and Acock, A. (1996) 'The task and ego orientation in sport questionnaire: Construct equivalence and mean differences across gender', *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 67(2), pp. 228–238. doi: 10.1080/02701367.1996.10607949.
- [7] Majzub, R. and Muhammad, T. A. (2011) 'Goal orientation and achievement of Junior in Golfers Malaysia', *Procedia - Social and*

- Behavioral Sciences*, 15, pp. 1644–1649. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.03.346.
- [8] Nicholls, J. G. (1984) 'Achievement motivation: Conceptions of ability, subjective experience, task choice, and performance', *Psychological Review*, 91(3), pp. 328–346. doi: 10.1037/0033-295X.91.3.328.
- [9] Ryska, T. A. (2003) 'Sportsmanship in young athletes: The role of competitiveness, motivational orientation, and perceived purposes of sport', *Journal of Psychology: Interdisciplinary and Applied*, 137(3), pp. 273–293. doi: 10.1080/00223980309600614.
- [10] Treasure, D. C. and Roberts, G. C. (1994) 'Perception of Success Questionnaire: preliminary validation in an adolescent population.', *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 79(1 Pt 2), pp. 607–610. doi: 10.2466/pms.1994.79.1.607.
- [11] Walling, M. D., Duda, J. L. and Chi, L. (1993) 'in Sport Questionnaire : Construct and Predictive Validity', pp. 172–183.

Perera D. S. L. "A Study of Task and Ego Goal Orientation of Gold Medal Winning Athletes of Sri Lanka." *IOSR Journal of Sports and Physical Education (IOSR-JSPE)*, 7(6) (2020): 07-10.