

A Comparative Analysis of Self-Efficacy among Kabaddi and Handball Players in the Iraqi Context

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Abstract This comprehensive research investigates self-efficacy levels among handball and kabaddi players in Iraq, utilizing the validated General Self-Efficacy Scale by Sahrayan and Muhammad Wasmaghafi. With 300 participants from diverse backgrounds in Iraqi universities and sports clubs, the study unfolds in two phases aligned with academic and training schedules. Employing SPSS for statistical analysis, the research reveals a marginal difference in mean scores (7.24 for Handball, 7.17 for Kabaddi). Despite this, the non-significant p-value ($p = 0.41$) leads to accepting the null hypothesis, emphasizing the intricate interplay between psychological factors and sports performance in Iraqi athletes. Situated within sports psychology and rooted in Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory, the study explores how athletes' beliefs in their abilities influence performance, motivation, and overall mental well-being. Focusing on Iraq, the research adds significance to understanding psychological dynamics in kabaddi and handball beyond football's dominance. The methodology employs the General Self-Efficacy Scale, a well-established tool, with robustness reinforced through validity and reliability assessments. Statistical analysis, including descriptive statistics and t-tests, provides a comprehensive overview of self-efficacy levels among handball and kabaddi players. Results challenge assumptions about sport-specific influences, indicating a non-significant difference in self-efficacy between the two sports. Practical implications extend to coaches and sports psychologists, suggesting tailored interventions for enhancing self-efficacy in both sports. In conclusion, this research expands comprehension of self-efficacy in diverse

sports, emphasizing its universality and holding practical implications for coaches, sports administrators, and researchers. Despite limitations, the study contributes valuable insights, paving the way for future investigations into psychological intricacies influencing sports performance and athletes' well-being. The findings hold practical implications, fostering an environment recognizing the omnipresence of self-efficacy in sports excellence.

Keywords Self-efficacy, Sports Performance, Athletes in Iraq, Handball, Kabaddi in Iraq, Psychological Aspects, Sports Psychology, Psychological Dynamics, General Self-efficacy Scale

1. Introduction

Sports psychology plays a pivotal role in understanding athletes' psychological attributes and mental preparedness, significantly contributing to their performance and success in various sports [1]. Self-efficacy, a construct rooted in Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory, has emerged as a central element in sports psychology, influencing athletes' beliefs in their ability to achieve desired outcomes and goals within their chosen sport [2]. The concept of self-efficacy has been extensively researched and linked to an athlete's performance, motivation, and overall mental well-being [3]. In Iraq, where sports have been an integral part of its culture and history, investigating and comparing self-

efficacy among athletes participating in different sports can provide valuable insights into the psychological dimensions of performance. This paper aims to assess and compare the self-efficacy levels of Kabaddi and Handball players in Iraq, shedding light on the psychological factors that may impact their performance and potentially inform sports psychology interventions tailored to these athletes. The increasing popularity of Kabaddi and Handball in Iraq, despite the traditional dominance of football, adds a layer of significance to understanding the unique psychological dynamics within these sports.

Background

Iraq has a rich sporting heritage, with various traditional and modern sports enjoying popularity. Kabaddi and Handball are two sports that have gained considerable attention and participation in the country. Kabaddi, a team sport from the Indian subcontinent, involves a unique blend of physical prowess, agility, and strategic thinking. Handball, on the other hand, is a fast-paced team sport characterized by quick decision-making, teamwork, and precise ball-handling skills. While these sports differ significantly in rules and gameplay, they share a common goal of achieving success through team effort and individual contributions [4].

As defined by Bandura [2], self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform specific actions or tasks to achieve desired outcomes. In sports, self-efficacy relates to an athlete's confidence to execute skills, overcome challenges, and succeed in their chosen sport [5]. It influences an athlete's choice of goals, the amount of effort invested in training, resilience in the face of adversity, and, ultimately, their performance [3]. Understanding the self-efficacy levels of athletes in different sports can provide valuable insights into the psychological aspects that contribute to their success or hinder their progress.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to the knowledge surrounding self-efficacy in sports and provide a nuanced perspective specific to Iraqi athletes. While there have been numerous studies on self-efficacy in sports, limited research has focused on the self-efficacy of athletes in Iraq, especially in Kabaddi and Handball. By comparing these two sports, we can explore how each sport's unique demands and characteristics may influence its athletes' self-efficacy beliefs. Such insights can inform coaches, sports psychologists, and sports organizations in Iraq on how to tailor training and support programs to enhance athletes' self-efficacy and, consequently, their performance.

Rationale for the Study

The rationale for conducting a comparative analysis of self-efficacy among Kabaddi and Handball players in Iraq is multifaceted. First and foremost, understanding the self-efficacy beliefs of athletes in these specific sports can offer

insights into the psychological factors that influence their performance and success. Self-efficacy is not a static trait but can be cultivated and enhanced through various interventions [3]. By identifying the factors contributing to higher self-efficacy in one sport over the other, sports psychologists and coaches can tailor their training and support programs to optimize athletes' mental preparation [4].

Summarizing key findings from existing literature, studies have consistently demonstrated the pivotal role of self-efficacy in influencing athletes' motivation, goal-setting behaviors, and overall performance [6]. Moreover, investigations into sport-specific self-efficacy have highlighted its nuanced nature, with factors such as the type of sport and individual differences contributing to variations in athletes' self-beliefs [7]. Recognizing these nuances is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of how self-efficacy operates within the context of specific sports.

While the literature extensively supports the role of self-efficacy in shaping athletes' performance outcomes, our initial review did not explicitly delve into why differences in self-efficacy might be expected between athletes in different sports, specifically handball and kabaddi. Acknowledging this, it is crucial to highlight the potential factors contributing to variations in self-efficacy within diverse sports. Previous research has suggested that the nature of a sport, including its physical demands, strategic complexities, and team dynamics, can influence athletes' self-efficacy beliefs [8].

Handball, which emphasizes quick decision-making, teamwork, and precise ball-handling skills, may foster a unique set of challenges and sources of confidence compared to Kabaddi, which requires a blend of physical prowess, agility, and strategic thinking. Although evident in sports, these distinctions need further exploration in the context of self-efficacy to provide a comprehensive understanding of the psychological dynamics underlying handball and kabaddi performance.

Building upon this rationale, the decision to focus on Kabaddi and Handball was not arbitrary; it was rooted in the unique sporting landscape of Iraq. Kabaddi and Handball have garnered considerable attention and participation in the country despite the traditional dominance of football. The distinctive characteristics of Kabaddi, requiring a blend of physical prowess, agility, and strategic thinking, and Handball, characterized by quick decision-making, teamwork, and precise ball-handling skills, present an intriguing contrast for examination.

Furthermore, the choice of these particular sports aligns with the researchers' commitment to recognizing the diversity of sports played in Iraq. While there is a rich sporting heritage in the country, limited research has delved into the self-efficacy of athletes in specific sports, especially in Kabaddi and Handball. By comparing these sports, the study aims to fill a gap in the existing literature and shed light on the psychological dimensions unique to

each sport.

Additionally, the researchers acknowledge the evolving sports culture in Iraq, with Kabaddi and Handball gaining popularity over the years. As the nation continues to rebuild and develop its sports infrastructure, understanding the self-efficacy levels of athletes in these sports becomes crucial. This knowledge can contribute to the effective allocation of resources, targeted support, and cultivation of a diverse and inclusive sports environment.

To further strengthen the rationale, we recognize the importance of a more detailed description of the self-efficacy measure used in this study. While our primary focus was on assessing overall self-efficacy, future research could explore specific facets, such as self-efficacy for skills, strategies, and performance, as suggested by Law and Hall [9]. Integrating these dimensions into our study design could provide a more nuanced understanding of the factors contributing to self-efficacy differences between Kabaddi and Handball players.

In conclusion, the selection of Kabaddi and Handball for comparison is rooted in their popularity, unique characteristics, and limited research on the self-efficacy of athletes in these sports in the Iraqi context. By focusing on these sports, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the psychological aspects that contribute to athletes' success, thereby contributing to the broader understanding of sports psychology in Iraq.

Potential Implications

The findings of this study hold the potential to yield several practical implications. First, they can inform the development of targeted interventions to enhance self-efficacy among Kabaddi and Handball players in Iraq. These interventions could include mental skills training, goal-setting strategies, and performance feedback mechanisms tailored to the specific demands of each sport [1]. Second, this research may guide sports administrators and policymakers in Iraq. Understanding the psychological dynamics of athletes in different sports can help allocate resources more effectively and ensure that sports organizations can provide the necessary support and facilities for athletes to thrive. Additionally, coaches and sports psychologists can benefit from a nuanced understanding of self-efficacy in these sports. By recognizing the unique challenges and sources of confidence in Kabaddi and Handball, they can develop coaching strategies that align with the athletes' self-efficacy beliefs and motivations.

In conclusion, this study not only aims to explore and compare the self-efficacy levels of Kabaddi and Handball players in Iraq, shedding light on the psychological dimensions that underlie their performance and success, but it also carries implications beyond the Iraqi context. Recognizing the broader applicability of these findings is crucial. Understanding the nuances of self-efficacy in diverse sports can contribute significantly to the global

understanding of sports psychology. The universal principles uncovered in this study may inform interventions and strategies for athletes worldwide, enriching the collective knowledge base in the field. Coaches, sports psychologists, and researchers internationally can draw valuable insights from our findings to enhance athlete well-being and performance across various cultural and sporting landscapes.

Problem Statement

This study addresses a critical gap in understanding psychological attributes influencing athletic performance and success, specifically focusing on self-efficacy levels among Kabaddi and Handball players in Iraq. Despite the acknowledged importance of more psychological factors in sports, there remains a need for comprehensive analysis in the existing literature regarding the specific dynamics of self-efficacy within these two distinct sports. The need for more clarity in this area hinders the development of targeted interventions and strategies to enhance athletes' mental well-being and performance. Therefore, the primary problem to be addressed is the need for a thorough examination of self-efficacy levels among Kabaddi and Handball players, shedding light on potential differences and providing valuable insights into the psychological underpinnings of athletes' achievements. By clarifying these aspects, this study aims to contribute to the broader understanding of sports psychology, informing coaches, athletes, and researchers alike about the nuanced factors that shape self-efficacy in the context of Kabaddi and Handball in Iraq [5].

Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant difference in the mean self-efficacy scores between Kabaddi and Handball players in Iraq.

This hypothesis assumes any observed differences in mean self-efficacy scores between the two groups are due to random variation, not an actual difference in the populations.

2. Methodology

This study is inherently descriptive in its approach, aiming to comprehensively analyze self-efficacy levels among Kabaddi and Handball players in Iraq. The research delves into the psychological attributes underpinning athletes' performance and success, particularly focusing on self-efficacy, as defined by Bandura [2]. Self-efficacy, which reflects an individual's belief in their ability to attain desired outcomes, has been widely recognized as a pivotal factor in sports performance [3]. This descriptive study aims to contribute to the knowledge surrounding self-efficacy in sports, offering specific insights into the self-efficacy beliefs of Iraqi athletes in Kabaddi and Handball, two sports with increasing prominence in the nation's sporting landscape [4].

Participants

The study comprised participants from Kabaddi and Handball players affiliated with Iraq's diverse universities and sports clubs. The research sample encompassed 300 players, with 155 individuals affiliated with Handball and 145 with Kabaddi. Each phase of the study spanned four distinct periods.

Measurement Instrument

To assess the participants' self-efficacy, the researcher utilized the General Self-Efficacy Scale that Sahrayan and Muhammad Wasmaghafi developed in 2015. This scale was chosen due to its well-established validity and reliability in assessing general self-efficacy beliefs across diverse populations. The decision to use the General Self-Efficacy Scale over other available measures was informed by its extensive use in previous research and its suitability for capturing a broad understanding of self-efficacy applicable to various life domains. The scale's proven cross-cultural applicability further justified its selection for this study.

Validity

In its original form, the self-efficacy questionnaire was subjected to a validation process. A panel of 14 experts from various fields of education, psychology, and sports psychology was convened to evaluate the questionnaire's content, behavioral objectives, and paragraph formulations. The experts assessed each section of the questionnaire using the X^2 equation, and sections that received an agreement percentage of 75% or higher were considered valid. Sections below this threshold were deemed invalid and needed modification or replacement. The results indicated that all questionnaire sections received the experts' validation, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The Validity of the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire

| Vertebrae | Number of Experts | Number of Approvers | Percentage |
|-----------|-------------------|---------------------|------------|
| 1-20 | 14 | 14 | 100 |
| 21-22 | 14 | 13 | 92.85 |

As Table 1 shows, all 14 experts approved sections 1 through 20, while sections 21 and 22 received approval from 13 experts. Consequently, all questionnaire sections were deemed valid for the research sample.

Reliability

The reliability of the self-efficacy questionnaire was assessed by dividing the questionnaire items into two

groups: individual elements and paired elements, representing the internal and external dimensions, respectively. Each group consisted of 11 items. The Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated between these two halves of the scale, yielding a coefficient of 0.832. To account for the stability coefficient for half of the scale, the Spearman-Brown equation was used after adjustment, resulting in a reliability coefficient of 0.909. This high-reliability coefficient indicates internal solid consistency, surpassing the standards of control centre measurements.

Method of Execution

The research was conducted in two phases, each with four time periods. The research procedures were implemented according to the weekly lecture schedule for university students and the weekly training units for sports club members. The participants were divided into groups based on their university or club affiliation. The researcher ensured that participants were motivated to ask questions about the questionnaires without the researcher's intervention. The following procedures were followed during the data collection process:

- Explanation of the questionnaire to be answered.
- Record and address any questions raised by participants.
- Providing equipment and materials required for data collection.
- Accurate description and explanation of the research goals.

Statistical Methods

The data obtained from the self-efficacy questionnaire were analyzed using the statistical software SPSS. Three main statistical methods were employed:

1. Descriptive statistics: Used to provide an overview of the self-efficacy scores among Kabaddi and Handball players in Iraq.
2. t-test: Utilized to compare the mean self-efficacy scores between the two sports groups.

This methodology section outlines the procedures followed to assess self-efficacy among Kabaddi and Handball players in Iraq, including the measurement instrument, validity and reliability assessments, data collection process, and statistical methods used for analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics, while Table 3 displays the results of an independent sample t-test comparing self-efficacy between handball and kabaddi players. Additionally, Figure 1 illustrates the mean self-efficacy levels among handball and kabaddi players.

Table 2. The descriptive of the population for the variable Self-efficacy among the handball and kabaddi players

| Game | Population characteristics | Statistic | Std. Error |
|----------|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Handball | Mean | 7.24 | .058 |
| | Variance | .42 | |
| | Std. Deviation | .65 | |
| | Minimum | 5.64 | |
| | Maximum | 8.86 | |
| | Skewness | .014 | .21 |
| | Kurtosis | -.31 | .43 |
| Kabaddi | Mean | 7.17 | .062 |
| | Variance | .48 | |
| | Std. Deviation | .69 | |
| | Minimum | 5.47 | |
| | Maximum | 8.74 | |
| | Skewness | .058 | .21 |
| | Kurtosis | -.24 | .43 |

Table 3. The t-test of self-efficacy for Handball and Kabaddi

| No. | Game | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t | df | Sig. (2tailed) | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
|-----|----------|-----|------|----------------|-----|-----|----------------|---|-------|
| | | | | | | | | Upper | Lower |
| 1 | Handball | 125 | 7.24 | .65 | .82 | 248 | .41 | -.097 | .23 |
| 2 | Kabaddi | 125 | 7.17 | .69 | .82 | | .41 | -.097 | .23 |

Table 2 provides an overview of the population characteristics related to self-efficacy among handball and kabaddi players in Iraq. The first column of the table, labelled "Game," lists the names of the respective sports: Handball and Kabaddi. The second column contains key population characteristics, including Mean, Variance, Std. Deviation, Minimum, Maximum, Skewness and Kurtosis. The third column presents the statistical values for these characteristics, while the fourth column displays the standard error of the population.

This study encompassed 300 participants, with 155 individuals affiliated with Handball and 145 with Kabaddi, all of whom willingly participated in the questionnaire. Out of this cohort, 125 respondents from the Handball group (80.65%) and 125 respondents from the Kabaddi group (86.21%) completed the survey successfully, constituting the final sample for analysis. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 28 years. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were computed for the analysed sample (N=125). Noteworthy findings indicate that Handball players exhibited a mean self-efficacy score of 7.24, with a standard deviation of 0.65.

In contrast, Kabaddi players demonstrated a mean self-efficacy score of 7.17, with a standard deviation of 0.69. Beyond mean and standard deviation, additional

descriptive statistics such as variance, minimum, maximum, skewness, and kurtosis coefficients were computed to characterize the dataset comprehensively. The final dataset comprises 125 participants each from Kabaddi and Handball backgrounds, establishing a sturdy foundation for the subsequent analysis of self-efficacy scores within the specified age range.

To assess the normality assumption, the Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted, and the obtained significance level exceeded 0.05. This result indicates that the data can be considered normally distributed.

The data presented in Table 3 reveals that the mean score for Handball is 7.24, while it is 7.17 for Kabaddi. Upon examination of the standard deviation column, it becomes apparent that these values are not precisely equal but are sufficiently close to assume equal variances.

Given that the p-value (0.41) obtained from our independent sample t-test exceeds the conventional significance level of 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), we do not have sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Consequently, our sample data support the assertion that the population means are equal. Notably, Table 2 demonstrates that the mean score of Handball surpasses that of Kabaddi, but this difference is not statistically significant. This suggests no substantial discrepancy in the

social efficacy between handball and kabaddi players.

Practical Significance

In addition to the theoretical implications, it is essential to consider the practical significance of the study's findings. Coaches and sports psychologists can leverage the insights gained from this research to tailor interventions and strategies for enhancing self-efficacy among Kabaddi and Handball players in Iraq. The nuanced understanding of self-efficacy levels allows one to implement targeted approaches, such as mental skills training, goal-setting strategies, and individualized support. Acknowledging the potential impact of these findings on athlete development can contribute to the advancement of coaching methodologies and sports psychology practices.

Figure 1 illustrates the average self-efficacy levels among handball and kabaddi players. The analysis and

interpretation of this graphical representation indicate that handball players exhibited higher levels of self-efficacy in social aspects, although this difference did not reach statistical significance.

4. Conclusions & Discussion

This study delves into the nuanced exploration of self-efficacy levels among handball and kabaddi players in Iraq. It employs a robust statistical analysis to decipher the intricacies of athletes' confidence in their respective sports. The comparative analysis, as presented in Table 3, revealed a marginal difference in mean self-efficacy scores between handball (7.24) and kabaddi (7.17) players. While this seemingly suggested a higher confidence among handball players, the non-significant p-value ($p = 0.41$) emphasizes that this difference was not statistically significant.

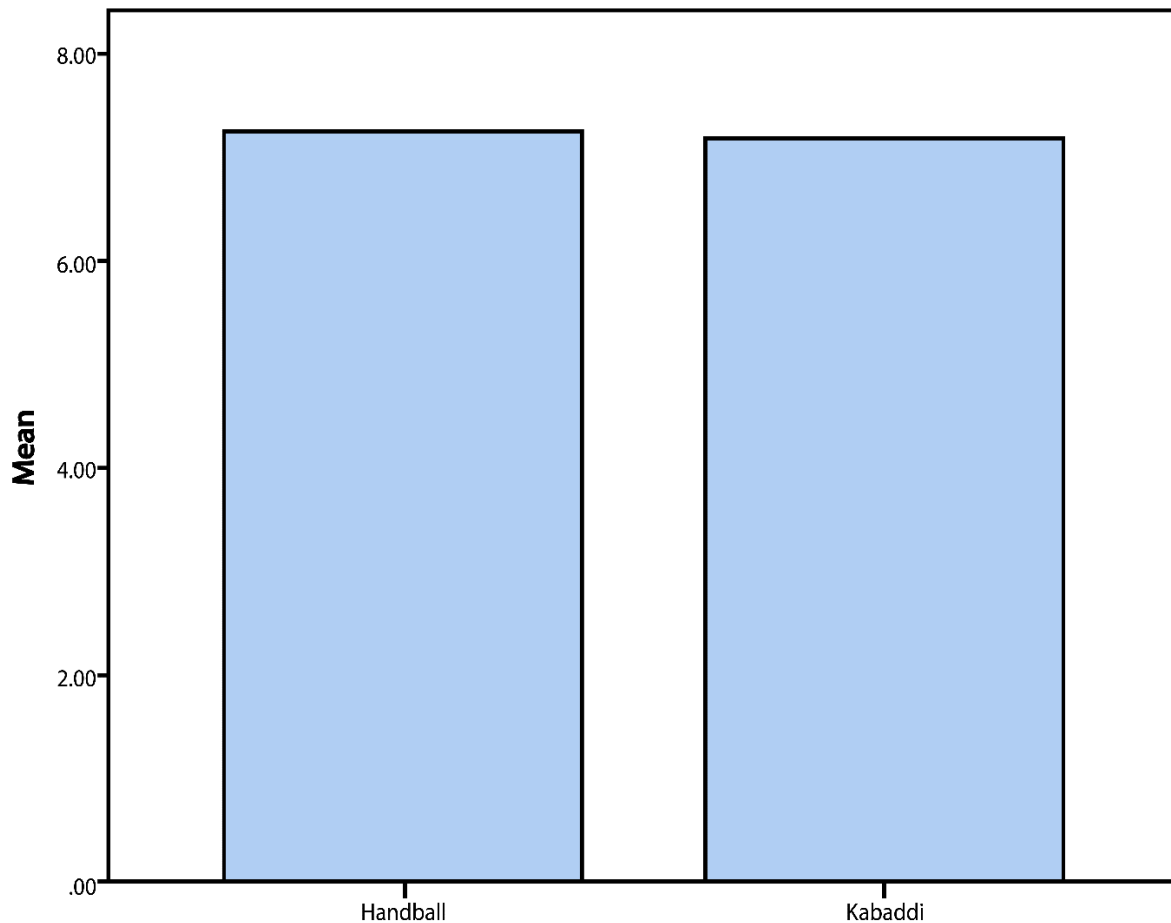


Figure 1. The graphical representation of self-efficacy for handball and kabaddi players

The literature on sports psychology underscores the critical role of self-efficacy in shaping athletes' performance outcomes [6]. Bandura's social cognitive theory posits that individuals with higher self-efficacy are more likely to set challenging goals, sustain effort in the face of obstacles, and exhibit greater resilience in pursuing excellence [2]. This aligns with the observed trend in our study, where handball players, on average, demonstrated slightly higher self-efficacy scores than kabaddi players. However, the difference did not reach statistical significance.

However, the non-significant difference challenges conventional assumptions about sport-specific self-efficacy. Past research has often suggested that the nature of a sport can influence athletes' self-efficacy beliefs [8]. Yet, our findings imply a more nuanced relationship, possibly influenced by individual and contextual factors.

The study's contribution lies in illuminating the intricate relationship between self-efficacy and sports, emphasizing the need for a more nuanced understanding. While the results did not showcase a significant difference, they underscore the universality of the importance of self-belief across diverse sports. This aligns with the work of Vealey [7], who highlighted the multidimensional nature of sport-specific self-confidence and the need to consider individual differences and situational factors in its assessment.

Moreover, the study's comprehensive statistical overview in Table 2 provides a rich characterization of the study population, reinforcing the reliability and validity of the results. Including skewness and kurtosis contributes to a deeper understanding of the data distribution and strengthens the study's methodological rigour [10].

Based on the results indicating a non-significant difference in self-efficacy between handball and kabaddi players, the researchers believe that there are several techniques that coaches and sports psychologists can consider to enhance the self-efficacy of players in both sports.

Performance Accomplishments: Provide players with opportunities for successful experiences and achievements in training and competitions. Successes, even small ones, contribute to an individual's belief in their capabilities.

Vicarious Learning: Foster a supportive team environment where players can observe and learn from the successes of their teammates. Modelling successful behaviors and achievements can positively impact self-efficacy.

Verbal Persuasion: Offer positive and constructive feedback to players, emphasizing their strengths and areas of improvement. Encouraging words from coaches and peers can significantly impact an athlete's self-belief.

Imagery and Visualization: Encourage players to use mental imagery and visualization techniques to picture themselves successfully executing skills and performing well in their respective sports. This can enhance their confidence in their abilities.

Goal Setting: Collaborate with players to set specific,

challenging, and realistic goals. These goals can provide a sense of accomplishment and increase self-efficacy.

Mental Skills Training: Implement cognitive skills training programs to build resilience, manage stress, and develop a positive mindset. These skills can contribute to an overall increase in self-efficacy.

Positive Reinforcement: Reinforce positive behaviors and efforts consistently. Acknowledging and rewarding hard work and dedication can contribute to a positive self-perception and increased self-efficacy.

Individualized Support: Recognize and address individual needs and challenges. Tailor interventions to meet each player's unique requirements and goals, acknowledging their specific strengths and areas for improvement.

Feedback Mechanisms: Establish clear and effective feedback mechanisms. Regular and constructive feedback helps players understand their progress and areas where they can focus their efforts to improve.

Cognitive-Behavioral Techniques: Implement cognitive-behavioral techniques, such as challenging negative thoughts and fostering positive self-talk. This can contribute to a more optimistic and self-assured mindset.

By integrating these techniques into coaching and training programs, coaches and sports psychologists can contribute to enhancing self-efficacy among handball and kabaddi players, irrespective of the observed similarities in self-efficacy levels between the two sports. Individualized approaches, positive reinforcement, and a focus on both mental and physical aspects of training can collectively contribute to fostering a robust sense of self-efficacy among athletes.

In conclusion, this research expands our comprehension of self-efficacy within the context of different sports and echoes the sentiment that confidence is a universal cornerstone in athletic pursuits. The non-significant difference in self-efficacy between handball and kabaddi players prompts further inquiry into the intricate interplay of psychological factors influencing athletes. Coaches, athletes, and researchers can glean valuable insights from these findings, fostering an environment that recognizes the omnipresence of self-efficacy in the pursuit of excellence across various sports.

5. Limitations and Future Directions

While this study contributes valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. Firstly, the use of a self-report questionnaire may introduce response bias. Future research could employ a combination of self-report measures and objective performance assessments to enhance the robustness of findings. Additionally, the study focused on specific age groups, and extending the investigation to a broader demographic could provide a more comprehensive understanding of self-efficacy in Kabaddi and Handball players.

This study lays the groundwork for future investigations, encouraging a continued exploration of the psychological intricacies that underpin sports performance. Exploring diverse populations, incorporating longitudinal studies, and considering contextual factors could further enrich our understanding of the nuanced relationship between self-efficacy and athletic achievement.

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