

Status of Mental Toughness of the Citizens of Ahmedabad

Dr. Rajul Mallik^{1*}

ABSTRACT

A survey was conducted to find out the level of mental toughness of the people of Ahmedabad city in view of rising suicide rates and cases of depression. Mental toughness is frequently used to refer to any set of positive attributes that helps a person to cope with difficult situations. It is a psychological edge that allows a person to cope better than the competition with the demands that are placed on her/him. A sample size of 990, all above the age of 18 years and belonging to various walks of society, was drawn. Data was collected using a questionnaire containing 18 items related to mental toughness. The survey result showed that mental toughness of the citizens of Ahmedabad city falls in the range of average. However, those who are in the police show the higher side of average mental toughness level. Their mean score was 64.11. The cops who often have to take tough decisions in the call of duty to enforce law and order are closely followed by teachers with a mean score of 63.73 and sports persons with a mean score of 63.22. Doctors who often have to take dispassionate decisions while treating their patients are close on their heels with a mean score of 63.00. Lawyers (61.95), government employees (61.29), college students (61.16) and bank employees (61.13) are the next in mental toughness. The survey also covered home-makers. They were found on the lower side of average range of score with a mean score of 60.54. Notably, the score range of 70-90 shows high level of mental toughness, 58-69 average mental toughness and 18-57 low mental toughness.

Keywords: *Mental toughness, Ahmedabad, BM Institute*

Mental toughness has been seen as a personality trait by Raymond Cattell (1957). The concept of tough mindedness was identified by him as one of the 16 primary source traits which were measured by his 16 personality factor questionnaire (16PF). Mental toughness is often referred to as a set of positive attributes that help a person to negotiate difficult situations. It is a psychological edge that allows a person to cope better than the competition with the demands placed on him/her as also the ability to perform better than the competition. Psychologists, especially in the area of sports, have been trying to define mental toughness. It has come to be seen as a measure of individual resilience and confidence that may shape success in sports, education and the workplace. As a broad concept, it emerged in the context

¹ Faculty & Co-ordinator, B.M. Institute of Mental Health, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India

*Responding Author

Received: September 03, 2017; Revision Received: October 07, 2017; Accepted: October 30, 2017

Status of Mental Toughness of the Citizens of Ahmedabad

of sports training, in the context of a set of attributes that allow a person to become a better athlete and able to cope difficult training and difficult competitive situations and emerge without losing confidence. However, Moran (2012) has warned against imprecise approach to define and explain the concept. According to Jones, Hanton and Connaughton, mental toughness is,

"Having the natural or developed psychological edge that enables you to: generally, cope better than your opponents with the many demands (competition, training, lifestyle) that sport places on a performer; specifically, be more consistent and better than your opponents in remaining determined, focused, confident, and in control under pressure." (2002:209)

Clough, et al have quoted Brennan to define mental toughness:

"The ability to handle situations. It's somebody who doesn't choke, doesn't go into shock, and who can stand up for what he believes. It's what someone who handles pressures, distractions and people trying to break their concentration. It involves focusing, discipline, self-confidence, patience, persistence, accepting responsibility without whining or excuses, visualizing, tolerating pain and a positive approach." (Clough, et al, 2002: 34)

Explaining the concept in Australian context, Gucciardi, Gordon, and Dimmock say,

"Mental toughness is a collection of values, attitudes, behaviors, and emotions that enable you to persevere and overcome any obstacle, adversity, or pressure experienced, but also to maintain concentration and motivation when things are going well to consistently achieve your goals." (2008:278)

Peter Clough, Keith Earle and David Sewell (2002), who have developed a tool to measure mental toughness, have come up with what they call 4Cs model (based on the four components that they identified as the components: control, commitment, challenge and confidence). By incorporating the opinions and evidences from research, athletes, coaches and sports psychologists they gave the following definition of mental toughness:

"Mental tough individuals tend to be sociable and outgoing, as they are able to remain calm and relaxed, they are competitive in many situations and have lower anxiety levels than others. With a high sense of self-belief and an unshakeable faith that they control their own destiny, these individuals can remain relatively unaffected by competition or adversity." (2002: 38)

A few other instruments have purported to measure mental toughness. The Performance Profile Inventory (PPI) developed by Jim Loehr used seven subscales to compute a mental toughness score. The Mental Toughness Inventory (MTI) developed by Middleton and

Status of Mental Toughness of the Citizens of Ahmedabad

colleagues measures mental toughness using twelve subscales and appears to show strong theoretical evidence for its formation. However, their validity has been questioned because construct validation has only been performed with a narrow sample of athletes (Anderson, 2011).

This survey is largely informed by the above explanation of mental toughness.

Why do we need mental toughness?

In almost every activity human beings indulge in, they try to be the best. The motivation to give off their best comes naturally in most cases. We have heard of people competing for sheer pleasure in ancient Olympics. Just being there and participate in the Games was an end in itself. No longer so. Globalisation of economies, corporatization of organisations and commercialisation of sports are leading to fierce competition in the market place. Conditions are not very different in others walks of life: social, political and cultural. To say that the world looks like obsessed with success and there is intense desire and drive to leave the competition behind would be stating the obvious. Increasingly, we hear of “mental game” being played in outdoor and indoor games. With “survival of the fittest” becoming the norm even in social arena, the importance of mental toughness is only getting reiterated.

Sheard (2009) has explained what separates athletes thriving on stiff competition from those who wilt under pressure, why is it that some athletes succeed despite adversity while others fail, why some athletes do not let competition affect them negatively while others let it influence and weaken their competitive performance. He goes on to explain that those falling in the first categories in each of these questions are products of successful development, implementation and continuous maintenance of the concept of mental toughness. Achievers today realise that winning goes beyond just technique and training, and that it also takes mindset or the ‘psychology of winning’ to attain the goal.

Gucciardi, et al (2009) use the concept of ‘mental toughness’ as an umbrella term for athletes who are considered to possess superior mental characteristics.

Indeed, mental toughness is not just about getting an incredible dose of inspiration or courage. It is about building the daily habits that allow one to stick to a schedule and overcome challenges and distractions. Mentally tough people don’t have to be more courageous, more talented, or more intelligent — just more consistent.

People with mental toughness have been found to have certain characteristics: they (i) are always in total control, (ii) put aside things they have no ability to impact, (iii) see the past as valuable training and nothing more, (iv) celebrate the success of others, (v) never allow themselves to whine, (vi) focus only on impressing themselves, (vii) count blessings, (viii) have strong belief system, (ix) always nurse optimism (Haden, 2016).

Status of Mental Toughness of the Citizens of Ahmedabad

Objective of the Study

- The objective of the present survey is to study the level of mental toughness of citizens of Ahmedabad city.

Variables and Hypothesis

The study is exploratory in nature. It does not have any dependent or independent variables; nor is there any hypothesis. Hence, no statistical tool for testing any hypothesis has been used.

METHODOLOGY

Selection of Samples

In the present study, the sample size is 990. The samples have been drawn from across different professions in Ahmedabad city and are above the age of 18. Table 1 below depicts the professions and sample size included in the study.

Table 1: Professions and sample size

S. No.	PROFESSIONS	SAMPLE SIZE
1	Police	100
2	Doctors	100
3	Sports Persons	100
4	Teachers/ Professors	100
5	College Students	100
6	Government Employees	100
7	Bank Employees	100
8	Housewives	100
9	Lawyers	100
	Total	900

Tools Used

The tool used in the study has been developed by Peter Clough, Keith Earle and David Sewell (2002). They followed a rigorous process of interviews with sportspersons, trainers and coaches, sought opinions of sports psychologists and a conducted a survey of available literature to develop the tool. Initially, a 48-item mental toughness questionnaire (MT48) was produced that provided an overall score for mental toughness. Alongside the MT48, the MT18 (18-item questionnaire) was developed to make it more accessible and usable for the end-user. The two instruments have a correlations of $r=0.87$, indicating a strong relationship. However, it must be noted that MT18 only provides an overall score for mental toughness and not a profile of sub-scales, as with the MT48 (the four sub-scales refer to the four components of challenge, commitment, confidence and control) (Cockerill, 2002: 33).

MT18 was used in this survey to measure the mental toughness of the citizens of Ahmedabad. A personal details sheet was attested with the questionnaire where the informants had to fill in the details of their profession, designation, education and gender.

Status of Mental Toughness of the Citizens of Ahmedabad

The rating scale of the questionnaire is as under:

- 1= Strongly disagree
- 2= Disagree
- 3= Neither agree nor disagree
- 4= Agree
- 5= Strongly agree.

Positive Items were presented under statements number 1,4,5,7,10,13,14,15,18

Negative Items were presented under statements number 2,3,6,8,9,11,12,16,17

The scoring for positive items was done in ascending order, i.e., 1,2,3,4,5 and in descending order for the negative items, i.e., 5,4,3,2,1.

Procedure

Keeping in mind the objective of the present study, the samples were selected with the help of Purposive Sampling Method. For this purpose, different professionals were contacted and after taking due permission from them, the questionnaire was administered. After collecting the data, scoring was done as per the norms. Thereafter, the mean was calculated for each profession and the scores were interpreted.

RESULTS

Table 2: The interpretation of scores obtained on the questionnaire

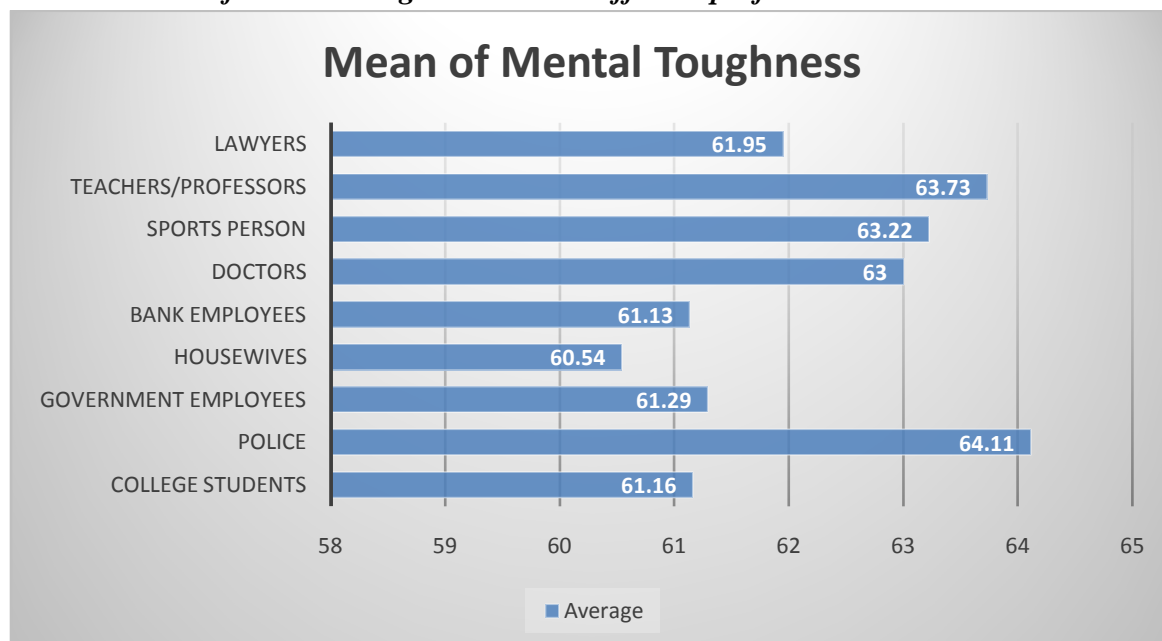
Score Range	Interpretation
70-90	High Mental Toughness
58-69	Average Mental Toughness
18-57	Low Mental Toughness

Table 3: Mean of Mental Toughness from the data obtained across different professions:

Profession	Mean	Interpretation
Police	64.11	Average
Teachers/professors	63.73	Average
Sports persons	63.22	Average
Doctors	63.00	Average
Lawyers	61.95	Average
Government employees	61.29	Average
College students	61.16	Average
Bank employees	61.13	Average
Home-makers	60.54	Average

Status of Mental Toughness of the Citizens of Ahmedabad

Chart 1: Mean of Mental Toughness across different professions



DISCUSSION

The survey was conducted of 900 people living in Ahmedabad city to assess their mental toughness. The researchers used an 18-item questionnaire based on Mental Toughness test.

Survey result shows that mental toughness of the citizens of Ahmedabad city is average. However, among them, those who are in the police show the highest level of mental toughness. Their mean score was 64.11. The cops who often have to take tough decisions in the call of duty to enforce law and order are closely followed by teachers with a mean score of 63.73 sports persons whose mean score was 63.22. Doctors who often have to take dispassionate decisions while treating their patients are close on their heels with a mean score of 63.00.

Lawyers (61.95), government employees (61.29), college students (61.16) and bank employees (61.13) are the next in mental toughness.

The survey also covered home-makers. They were last on the rung with a mean score of 60.54.

Acknowledgment

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interests: The author declared no conflict of interests.

REFERENCES

- Andersen, M. B. (2011). Who's mental? Who's tough and who's both? Mutton constructs dressed up as lamb. In Daniel F Gucciardi, and Sandy Gordan (Eds.) *Mental toughness in sport: developments in research and theory* (pp. 69-88). New York: Routledge
- Cattell, R. (1957). *Personality and motivation structure and measurement*. New York: World Book.
- Clough, P., et al (2002). Mental toughness: The concept and its measurement. In Ian M Cockerill (Ed) *Solutions in sports psychology*. London: Thomson.
- Cockerrill, I. (2002). *Solutions in Sports Psychology*. London: Thomson.
- Gucciardi, D. F.; Gordon, S.; Dimmock, J.; Mallett, C. J. (2009). Understanding the coach's role in the development of mental toughness: perspectives of elite Australian football coaches. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 27 (13), 1483–96.
- Gucciardi, D.; Gordon, S.; Dimmock, J. (2008). Towards an Understanding of Mental Toughness in American Football. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*. 20 (3), 261–281.
- Haden, J. (2015, November 10). 8 Habits of people with amazing determination and willpower. Retrieved from <http://www.inc.com/jeff-haden/8-habits-of-people-with-exceptional-determination-and-willpower.html>
- Haden, J. (2016, April 6). 9 Things mentally tough people always do. <http://www.inc.com/jeff-haden/tenacious-persistent-and-successful-9-things-mentally-tough-people-always-do.html>
- Jones, G.; Hanton, S.; Connaughton, D. (2002). What is this thing called mental toughness? An investigation of elite sport performers. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*. 14 (3), 205–218.
- Moran, A.P. (2012). *Sport and exercise psychology: A critical introduction*. New York: Routledge.
- Sheard, M. (2009). *The achievement mindset: Understanding mental toughness*. London: Routledge.

How to cite this article: Mallik R (2017). Status of Mental Toughness of the Citizens of Ahmedabad. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, Vol. 5, (1), DIP: 18.01.012/20170501, DOI: 10.25215/0501.012