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Saramie S Belleza
University of Mindanao
Tagum College, Philippines

Ronald Ompoc
Nasipit Central Elementary
School, Philippines

Sports anxiety: Investigating the lived experiences and coping strategies of student athletes

Saramie S Belleza and Ronald Ompoc

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Abstract

This research was conducted in Agusan del Norte. Participants were high school athletes who competed in various local and national events. The phenomenological approach was used in the qualitative research method. This study sought to learn more about how sports anxiety affects athlete's performance and how they deal with their anxieties before and during competitions. This synthesis also addressed cognitive and somatic anxiety in relation to athletes' performance. To collect the necessary data, we conducted a qualitative study and interviewed ten participants, five for in-depth interviews and five for focus groups. Data triangulation was achieved through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and us, the researchers, as third informants.

Keywords: Athletes, coping, sports anxiety

Introduction

Sports performance is associated with a wide range of passions. Athletes can witness the excitement and believe in achieving valued pretensions that will bring them asked happiness and satisfaction. In addition, they may feel scarified, which causes them to come nervous, their muscles to tense, stomach pains, the body to strain, the hands to come glacial, and negative studies to take over, leading them to believe that they will noway palm (Bali, 2015; Kaplánová, 2019) ^[1].

According to disquisition, cognitive anxiety has a more significant enervating effect on performance than physical anxiety. Cognitive and physical anxiety are significant predictors of athletic performance. Indeed, all ten studies included in this emulsion addressed cognitive and physical anxiety in relation to athlete performance. According to one author, largely anxious subjects are likelier to perform deficiently during competition than lower anxious subjects (Chamberlain, 2007) ^[8].

Situations or circumstances perceived or interpreted as dangerous, potentially dangerous, or frustrating generally spark the stress response. The term stressor refers to situations or circumstances involving some objective physical or cerebral peril. Anxiety about how athletes perform in competition can be salutary. At the same time, negative study patterns and failed prospects can produce a tone- fulfilling vaticination. Anxiety can impact success if there's a significant difference between how an athlete performs during practice and how an athlete performs during competitions. likewise, managing ways are used to reduce an athlete's position of pressure and thrill during a game. managing strategies include tone- talk, visualization, and muscle stimulation. Imagery is a type of cognitive restructuring. According to the proposition, athletes"re-interpret past negative gests " by looking for the" tableware filling" in the pall (Morgan, 2010) ^[6].

Materials and Methods

The phenomenological approach was used in the qualitative research method. To collect the necessary data, we conducted a qualitative study and interviewed ten participants, five for in-depth interviews and five for focus groups. Qualitative research questions frequently begin with how or what to gain a detailed understanding of what is going on in relation to the subject (Patton, 2002; Seidman, 1998) ^[9, 10]. A qualitative case study approach focused on phenomenological procedures was used to collect and analyze the data.

Corresponding Author:
Saramie S Belleza
University of Mindanao
Tagum College, Philippines

Results

Essential Themes about the Lived Experiences of Student Athletes

Self-Activated: Athletes' confidence in their capability to execute their skill in competition against their opponent is determined by their belief in themselves. It denotes a player's confidence in his capability to win the competition. A baseline assessment of their former performances, training, and medication is also used to determine their confidence position.

I think as an athlete you call it, like what do you call it... performance anxiety if I am already on the court where anxiety attacks you like you are already anxious and completely lose your mind and like I am slacking. That is why I am rarely chastised by my coach for what has happened to me or why I am acting strangely; it is because I am being attacked by anxiety and driven by being pressured by the crowd. (IDI_2)

In the absence of immediate external constraints, all serious sport participants must engage in goal-directed behaviors. Psychologists have created theoretical models of self-regulation and self-regulation principles summarized by the models (Kirschenbaum, 1987) [5].

Worried: In this theme, participants shared their various experiences with tense situations. They become tense when they imagine what might happen if their desired outcome is not achieved. They described their anxieties and the experiences they had while dealing with them.

Anxiety is my experience. When I am nervous, I remember how hard my training has been and how much I have improved in order to compete in the national game.(FGD_4) It has been shown that less experienced athletes show a sustained increase in anxiety before and during competition, while more experienced athletes often show increased pre-event anxiety and decreased anxiety just before and during competition (Espahani and Soflu, 2010). These symptoms of competition anxiety can become habits and become ingrained in an athlete's body. A high level of self-confidence helps athletes avoid misinterpreting anxiety symptoms as handicaps and shifts their emotional responses to positive ones.

Optimistic: Participants expressed difficulties in the competition at difficult moments. They discussed how to motivate yourself to be more positive, which will help you manage and improve your skills.

My previous experience competing against my opponents will determine how the game plays out. Negative thinking about what will happen is dangerous because it leads to distraction. As a result, as a competitor, anticipating what will happen during the game is critical. Nervousness and pressure are also present, but the anticipation of what will happen during the game is crucial. (IDI_4)

People with a positive attitude do not give up in the face of obstacles and setbacks. Optimistic athletes compete out of a desire to succeed, not a fear of failure. The purpose of my research was to find out if optimism promotes healthy behavior in athletes. People who have a positive attitude towards the world around them do not give up on their dreams despite obstacles and setbacks. Optimistic athletes compete with the hope of winning, not the fear of losing. However, even if they lose, they see it as a result of circumstances beyond their control, rather than their own flaws or inability to cope with their competition (Goleman, 1998).

Essential Themes about Coping Strategies among Student-Athletes

Self-Taught: Previous experiences had a significant impact on their athletic performance. They said they could use their experience to prepare for future competitions.

When I'm scared and can't sleep, I look up my mistakes and think about what I should do to improve myself. I recall all of my mistakes and why I am the way I am, so I constantly check myself and reflect on my mistakes.(FGD_2)

By learning at our own pace, we turn our attention to the lesson itself. Athletes are not bound by pressure and are only interested in gaining knowledge. Besides improved memory performance. Athletes learn from experience and play. They learn and discover new things in a variety of subjects.

Self-Motivated: In the context of sport, intrinsically motivated athletes value a process of change that aligns with their goals and values. Athletes with high levels of intrinsic motivation are more likely to compete in their sport with passion and a strong work ethic. (Horn, Bloom, Berglund & Packard, 2011) [11].

Only training has helped me overcome the stress I was experiencing. Training allows an athlete to relax, take a deep breath, and think about what they do the majority of the time. That is all.(FGD_1)

Even if athletes don't particularly enjoy the activity, they will participate if it fits their values and needs. While it is important to understand the motivation of athletes, it is also important to understand the variables that determine why and how athletes experience these different forms of motivation. Horn, Bloom, Berglund & Packard (2011) [11]; Hodge & Lonsdale (2011) [5].

Self-Control: All athletes improve their ability to overcome obstacles and achieve their goals. It also starts an upward spiral of high confidence and performance, where positive thinking leads to better performance in competition. They set themselves up for success as student-athletes when they believe in themselves.

You should work on improving your self-esteem. If you make a mistake, don't let it consume you completely. And, in the game, you should prepare for it before you play. In every game, you should try to relax yourself and maintain a positive attitude both on and off the court. (IDI_3)

A wide range of sports and exercise behaviors necessitate self-control, including improved athletic performance. (Englert, 2016) [3]. To perform at their best in sports, athletes must manage their cognitive, emotional, and physical processes and behavioral tendencies.

Discussion

Lived Experiences of Student Athletes

Players will need to be able to adapt to deal with a variety of opponents that will test their strategies and their impact on the outcome. Based on participants' responses, student-athletes exchanged ideas on how to deal with sports anxiety in general, and analysis of the data revealed three key themes. The first theme reveals self-activated. The ability to remain calm in the face of strong emotions and adapt and respond appropriately to the environment. Athletes who know how to control themselves are much more likely to succeed in their games and reach their goals. And when an athlete has confidence, they believe they can do anything. They believe they can do any skill or task. People who lack self-confidence fear failure, which can have a significant impact on our ideas, behaviors, and emotions.

The second theme pertains to worried. Athletes feel pressured usually because they feel they are being judged. Expectations, like pressures, are hypothetical predictions about the future. Athletes often feel pressured when imagining what will happen if their intended goals are not met. 2012 (Bayrock). They have to manage their anxiety and take responsibility for their game. All sports coaches should be concerned about the effects of pressure and tension on their players. Many athletes work hard muscles. Every athlete reacts differently to pressure and anxiety. Additionally, elite student-athletes must always keep their efforts in mind so they don't feel pressured and strained during training.

The last theme is optimistic. Positive thinking has been found to have the strongest and most beneficial association with national self-confidence. In fact, studies have shown that athletes who are taught to use positive thinking have lower levels of pre-competition anxiety and higher levels of confidence. (2012) (Hartsi Georgiadis). Once they master their craft, they can focus their energies on a positive outlook and keep their heads in the game. In fact, their ability to handle difficult situations with a positive attitude means they are more likely to receive the attention and support they need to move forward. It's important to remember that optimism doesn't mean unrealistic expectations.

Coping Strategies of Student-Athletes

Professional athletes have to deal with feeling choked under pressure. Survival strategies are used to reduce an athlete's tension and arousal prior to competition. Coping skills include self-talk, visualization, and physical relaxation.

The first theme pertains to self-taught. Self-learning is a didactic and educational process in which students take responsibility for planning and evaluating their own learning experiences. To achieve the goal of exercising control over the social environment and their activities, the coach acts as a facilitator. (2019, Tolo and Limone). Athletes learn from experience and play. They learn and discover new things in a variety of subjects.

The second theme refers to self-motivated. Motivation is an important component of sports performance. The best motivation is a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation that encourages you to set goals and work hard to achieve them. The best thing about self-motivation is that you can take it with you wherever you go and use it whenever you want. This is your inner voice and is best used while preparing for training, sports or challenges.

According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), athletes worked faster with step-by-step movement patterns and enjoyed the training process more. Also, commitment to learning increases when there is no personal interaction. (December 2013)

The last theme reveals self-control. Athletes manage their anxiety levels in stressful situations (e.g., sporting events; Englert & Bertrams, 2012)^[7], force them to continuously perform physically demanding exercises (Wagstaff, 2014)^[12], or force them to stick to long-term training plans. You should. . (Martin Ginnis and Bray, 2011). Any act of self-control, such as managing your emotions and persevering. This power can be temporarily depleted after the first act of self-control, making subsequent acts of self-control less effective.

Conclusion

Many athletes around the world love to play sports. Athletes usually start at a young age and develop a strong passion for their sport. Today's athletes absorb so much more than the

sport they play. They had a lot of sports anxieties to accept and overcome. Fighting the fear of competition is hard. These are just some of the common problems athletes face.

On the other hand, the results revealed three key points in the life experiences of student athletes: self-activity, anxiety and optimism. During the student-athlete survival strategy, three themes emerged: self-education, self-motivation, and self-regulation. Many people in today's society are athletes. The consequences of being an athlete include time commitment, personality development, and varying levels of anxiety. We tend to exaggerate our inner idealizations of the athlete's life and experience. However, this is far from reality. Their life is not a spoon-fed situation where every desire and goal as a team to win every competition is instantly fulfilled.

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