COPING STRATEGIES USAGE AND LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE ON BASKETBALL PLAYERS

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Abstract

Anxiety is one of the main barriers that impact on performance among athletes and countless researches have been conducted on coping strategy techniques to reduce anxiety among athletes. Coping strategies techniques include positive self-talk, physical activity, goal setting, thinking on practice, thought stopping, remembering the worst-case scenario, focus on what you can control, imagery, meditation, simulation, breathing techniques, progressive relaxation, autogenic training and biofeedback. The present study sought to explore potential coping techniques used by basketball players. The sample consisted of 101 basketball players. The sample was drawn from athletes who competed Sport between Universities. Results showed that imagery have the highest usage among athletes. National athletes used highest coping techniques than state, district, and university level athletes. Besides that national athletes showed highest performance level compared other categorised. Sport psychologists, sport counselors and coaches should encourage their athletes to use positive coping strategies to improve performance.

Key words: Anxiety, Coping Strategies and Performance

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Background

According to Raglin and Hanin (2000), anxiety is the main psychology factor has a great influence on performance. Many researches showed that winning in a competition depends on how an athlete can control their anxiety levels (Humara, 2001). Since anxiety is one of the main barriers to performance among athletes (Cox, Qiu & Liu, 1993; Ortiz, 2006), many psychological researches have been conducted on coping strategies to reduce the level of anxiety of athletes (Cox et al., 1993; Taylor, 1996; Humara, 2001; Richards, 2004). When athletes feel anxious in a competitive situation, they try to use personal coping resources to reduce the anxiety (Cox, 2011). Coping has been defined by Lazarus and Folkman (1984: 141) as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taking or exceeding resources of the person". Coping techniques identified used by athletes are positive self-talk, physical activity, goal setting, thinking on practice, thought stopping, remember the worst-case scenario, focus on what you can control, imagery, meditation, simulation, breathing techniques,progressive relaxation, autogenic training and biofeedback.

As a psychological method for improving self-confidence, positive self-talk deals with stressful situations by eliminating pessimistic thinking and worry, and leads to positive and rational feelings about an athlete's ability (Weinberg & Gould, 2011; Cox, 2011; Ampofo-Boateng, 2009). Researchers have shown that engaging in physical activity has a healthy impact on blood circulation, relaxation and reduces anxiety and tension (Anshel, 2003; Zaichkowsky & Takenaka, 1993). Goal setting is a powerful technique that can be used to improve performance by setting performance, realistic, long term and short term goals (Weinberg and Gould, 1999; Anshel, 2003; Ampofo-Boateng, 2009). In a sport context, when athletes 'think practice', they are reflecting on a relatively relaxed, nonthreatening environment in which their sport skills were performed successfully (Quinn, 2008; Anshel, 2003). Thought stopping aims at changing negative thinking to positive thinking and concentrates on the task (Ampofo-Boateng, 2009). The worst-case scenario for an athlete is losing the contest and poor performance (Weinberg & Gould, 2011; Anshel, 2003), but a contest's outcome is not always under the person's control, so by thinking of the worst case scenario, an athlete is placing sport in perspective and enhancing self-confidence (Neil, Mellalieu & Hanton, 2006; Anshel, 2003). By focusing on what can be

controlled, worry about uncontrollable factors is reduced and athletes become task oriented, and concentrate on immediate performance demands (Anshel, 2003; Weinberg & Gould, 2011).

Furthermore, Imagery, known as mental rehearsal, mental visualization or mental practice, helps athletes to reduce anxiety and improve performance by activating the muscles (Cox, 2011; Ampofo-Boateng, 2009). While, simulation makes athletes use real competition environment like audience, noise, mass media and referee, which can reduce anxiety at the sport event (Weinberg & Gould, 2011; Gervis, 2000; Bull, 2000). Mastering the technique of deep breathing can make athletes relax relieving tension and enhance self-confidence (Weinberg & Gould, 2011; Cox, 2011). Progressive Relaxation based on Jacobson's idea that it is impossible to be nervous or tense in any part of the body where the muscles are completely relaxed (Cox, 2011). Autogenic training involves the use of the mind to influence the body to balance the self-regulative systems that control the physiological functioning of the body, including circulation, breathing and heart rate (Ampofo-Boateng, 2009). Biofeedback uses instruments that help people to control responses of the autonomic nervous system and its usefulness for athletes who suffer from excessive anxiety (Cox, 2011).

Most of the previous researches focus on elite athletes, while ignoring less successful athletes, especially in basketball. Therefore the difference in coping strategy level among different categories of skill of athletes in basketball remains unclear. In Malaysia, the level of coping strategies among basketball athletes of national, state, district and university level are yet to be identified through research.

The result of this research will determine the influence of coping strategy on basketball sport performance. The findings allow coaches and trainers of basketball to implement coping strategies, especially on unsuccessful athletes to enhance performance in sports.

Aims

The aim of this research was to identify the coping techniques used by basketball players to deal with anxiety, used by different categories of athletes. Besides that, this research also evaluates the relationship between level of coping strategy and sport performance of basketball players.

Methods

Coping Strategy Techniques Questionnaire was used which comprised of positive self-talk, physical activity, goal setting, think on practice, thought stopping, remember the worst-case scenario, focus on what you can control, imagery, meditation, simulation, breathing techniques, progressive relaxation, autogenic training and biofeedback.

The sample consisted of 101 basketball players, including the national athletes (N=33), state athletes (N=30), district athletes (N=27) and university athletes (N= 11).

Result and Discussion

Respondents' Profile

The respondents' profile described their ranking, ethnic and age. Table 1 shows the overall results of the respondents' profile for 101 basketball players. The overall mean age for these respondents was 22.22 years old. The age of male respondents varied from 19 to 25 years, where the mean age was 23.45 years old. The age of female players ranged from the minimum of 19 to the maximum of 24 years old. The mean age for female respondents was 21.41 years old.

The variable "rank which is gathered through this study is categorized into four levels namely, national, state, district and university. The result showed that 33 respondents had participated at national, whilst 30 respondents participate at state, 27 had participated at district and 11 respondents participated at the university level. Majority of the respondents, were undergraduates for Degree (n=51) and Diploma (n=50) programmes.

Table 1: Respondents' Profile (n=101)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
Athletes according to rank National				
State	33	32.67		
District	30	29.70		
University	27	26.73		
	11	10.90		
Programme Diploma				
Degree	51	50.49		
	50	49.51		
Age Male				
Female			23.45	1.77
Overall			21.41	2.01
			22.22	1.53

Cronbach Reliability Coefficients

In this study, Cronbach alpha coefficients were found relatively high, ranging from .87 to .88 (Table 2).

Table 2: Cronbach Reliability Coefficients

Questionnaire	Cronbach's Alpha (n=101)
Coping Strategy Techniques Questionnaire	.8826
Sports Performance	.8741

Coping Strategy Techniques of Basketball Players

Coping strategy techniques were evaluated and imagery (x⬜= 24.1732) have the highest mean, follow by positive self talk (x⬜= 22.3521), thought stopping (x⬜= 21.5144), physical activity (x⬜= 20.7891), meditation (x⬜= 19.4571), simulation (x⬜= 18.4121), remember the worst-case scenario (x⬜= 17.3422), goal setting (x⬜= 15.4271), breathing techniques (x⬜= 14.1671), focus

on what you can control (x= 13.3245), autogenic training (x= 12.8191), think on practice (x= 11.4671), progressive relaxation (x= 10.7641), and biofeedback (x= 10.0179).

Categories of **basketball** *Players*

One way ANOVA showed significant differences among categories of basketball players, F (3, 101) = 14.812, p<0.01.

Table 3: Coping Techniques based on categories of athletes

Categories	Mean	Value-F	Value-p
National	24.4878		
State	22.1021		
District	18.4577	14.812**	0.000
University	16.0012		

** p< 0.01

The result showed that national athletes used highest coping strategy techniques than state, district, and university level athletes. Coping stragtegy techniques of university athletes was lower than national, district and state athletes (Table 4).

Table 4: Pos Hock Tukey: Level of Coping Strategeis among different skills of basketball Players

Categories According to Skills	National	State	District	University	N
National		*(1.3342)	* (1.7112)	* (2.0042)	33
State			* (1.7851)	* (1.9432)	30
District				*(1.1021)	27
University					11

*p=0.05

The purpose of this study was to identify the usage of coping strategy techniques among basketball   athletes. The result reviewed that national level athletes used the highest coping

strategy techniques and university level athletes the lowest. A few previous researches supported this result that elite athletes used the highest coping strategy techniques, among those research are Jarvis (2002), Dale (2000) and Park (2000).

Research of Hackfort and Spielberger (1989) and, LeUnes and Nation (2002) showed that elite athletes use coping strategy techniques to combat anxiety and to enhance performance. In other words, the highest usage of coping strategy techniques can differentiate between elite and non elite athletes. This research also has been supported Anshel, Williams and Williams (2000) that elite athletes are popular in using many kind of positive coping techniques.

Performance of basketball *Players*

One way ANOVA showed significant differences among categories of performance of basketball athletes,$F (3, 101) = 15.112$, $p<0.01$. (Table 5).

Table 5: Level of Sport Performance among different skills of Basketball Players

Categories According of Skills	Sport Performance	
	Mean	**Value-F**
National	23.4521	
State	20.4542	
District	18.7172	15.112*
University	14.5521	

     * *p* =0.01

The result showed that athletes in the categories of district skill exhibit lower level of sport performance than categories of state and university, whereas national athletes showed the highest levels of sport performance.

Table 6: Pos Hock Tukey: Level of Performance among different skills of basketball Players

Categories According to Skills	National	State	District	University	N
National		*(1.1551)	* (1.6410)	* (1.9893)	33
State			* (1.3122)	* (1.8800)	30
District				*(1.1298)	27
University					11

*p<0.05

The result showed that high performance athletes use the highest coping strategy techniques and low performance athletes use the lowest coping strategy techniques. Several researches indicated that using positive coping strategies as above can enhance performance. Among those are Cox (2011), Caird, McKenzie and Sleivert (1999) Kavussanu, and Crews and Gill (1998). Coping strategies play an important role in enhancing performance (Aufenanger, 2005; Hanton & Jones, 1999).

Conclusions

As the conclusion of this study, it is found those national or elite basketball players use the highest coping strategy techniques and university level athletes, the lowest. Furthermore, the performances of those athletes using high coping strategy techniques are highest and performances of athletes with low coping strategy techniques are the lowest. The findings emphasize the importance of coping strategy techniques to enhance performance. Sport psychologists, sport counselors and coaches should encourage their basketball players to use the highest coping strategy techniques since it has been proved as the key for success.

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