

**LEVEL OF SELF CONFIDENCE AMONG UNIVERSITI
SAINS MALAYSIA (USM) ATHLETES**

Vincent A. Parnabas*

Yahaya Mahamood**

Julinamary Parnabas***

Jebakumari Selvarani Ebenezev****

ABSTRACT

Self-confidence is an athlete's belief that he or she can successfully execute and carry out an appropriate performance. Many researches indicated that high level of self confidence among elite athletes enhance performance. In many research reviews, researchers have found that low level of self confidence had deteriorating effect on athletes' or teams' performance. Elite athletes are well-known for high confidence levels. However, to date there has been no attempt to examine self confidence level among athletes of non-elite. Most of the previous researches focus on elite athletes, while ignoring less successful athletes. Therefore, the main aim of the study was to describe and compare the self-confidence level differences among different categories of skills of athletes. The present study also compared the level of self confidence among gender. Data was collected from 78 athletes of University Sains Malaysia (USM), using a 27 item Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2, during MASUM (Sport between Universities) competition. The results showed that national level athletes obtained the highest score on self-confidence. Furthermore, university and district level athletes exhibit the lowest level of self-confidence. The result also showed that male athletes obtained higher score on self confidence compared females. Based on

* Faculty of Sport Science and Recreation, Universiti Teknologi MARA(UiTM), Malaysia

** College of Art and Science, University Utara Malaysia (UUM), Malaysia

*** Institut Pendidikan Guru, Kampus Darulaman, Kedah, Malaysia

**** Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA(UiTM), Malaysia

the current results, it is recommended that sport psychologists, sport counselors and coaches in Malaysia use the findings to design appropriate training programs to help district, university level and female athletes to acquire higher level of self confidence to enhance their performance in sports.

Keywords : Self Confidence, elite athletes, non-elite athletes, performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Self-confidence is an athlete's belief that he or she can successfully execute and carry out an appropriate performance (Weinberg & Gould, 2011). Self-confidence athletes are motivated to achieve success and they show high levels of self-confidence or self belief that is essential in deciding how far they are prepared to strive to achieve their goal (Ampofo-Boateng, 2009). Self-confidence has been identified as a most important mental skill for a success in sport by individuals engaging in competitive sports, including athletes and coaches (Vealey & Chase, 2008). Self-confidence generates positive emotions, such as, optimism, less anxiety, relaxation, and happiness in athletes (Ampofo-Boateng, 2009; Vealey, Hayashi, Garner-Holman & Giacobbi, 1998). Further, it helps athletes to achieve superior performance (Craft, Magyar, Becker & Feltz, 2003).

Self-confidence plays an important role in reducing anxiety (Humara, 2001). Besides that, self confidence also enhances positive emotions and concentration, and decreased muscular tension (Ampofo-Boateng, 2009; Weinberg & Gould, 2011).

Athletes who shows a lack of self-confidence contributes their poor performance in sports. According to Martens (1987), lack of self confidence makes athletes vulnerable to make mistakes. Low level of self-confidence has a tendency to deteriorate performance in sports.

Elite athletes are well-known for high confidence levels. Schinke and Da Costa (2001), Cleary and Zimmerman (2001) and, Jones and Hardy (1990) found that in general, elite athletes tended to have very high levels of confidence. Hemery (1986) study of 63 elite athletes showed that 90% of the sample had a very high level of self-confidence. Quite a number of research indicated

that high self confidence among elite athletes enhance performance (Jones, Hanton & Swain, 1994; Perry & William 1998; Hanton, O'Brien & Mellalieu, 2003). However, research of Williams and Krane (1998) showed there is no difference between the level of self confidence among elite and non elite athletes.

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

Gender, as a psychological factor can influence the performance as well (Cartoni, Minganti & Zelli, 2005). A few researches had done to find out the level of self confidence between genders. Most of the research indicated that female athletes have a low level of self confidence than males (Clifton & Gill, 1994; Krane & Williams, 1994; Cartoni et al. 2005). Besides that, a few research showed there is no significant difference on level of self-confidence between male and female athletes (Cox & Whaley, 2004; Perry & Williams, 1998).

Psychologist should have done more research on the level of self confidence between different categories of skills and genders, to understand the effect of self confidence and to help athletes to achieve the highest performance in sport. Therefore this research can determine the level of self confidence between different skills of athletes and genders.

2. AIMS

The aim of this research was to identify the level of self confidence among athletes. In other words, the rationale for this study was designed to examine the levels of self confidence among athletes of different skills. Therefore the purpose of this study is to correlate a relationship between self confidence, among athletes of different skills (national, state, district and university levels). Besides that, this research also evaluates the difference level of self confidence between genders. The current investigation sought to determine whether any observable gender differences existed on the self-confidence.

3. METHODS

The participants of this study were recruited from Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). The instrument used for the study comprised of a 27-item Competitive State Anxiety Inventory–2 (CSAI-2), using a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 4 (very much so). The questionnaire has been distributed during MASUM (Sport between Universities) competition to the athletes of USM. The sample consisted of 78 athletes, with national athletes (N=17), state athletes (N=20), district athletes (N=23), and university athletes (N= 18).

4. RESULT

4.1 Level of Self-Confidence among different skills

One way ANOVA showed significant differences of level of self-confidence among categories of athletes, $F(3,78) = 13.221, p < .01$ (Table 1).

TABEL 1 : Level of Self confidence among different categories of USM athletes

Categories According of Skills	Self-Confidence	
	Mean	Value-F
National	17.1147	13.221*
State	15.5512	
District	13.2278	
University	10.5547	

* $p < 0.05$

Post-Hoc Tukey Test (Table 2) showed that level of self-confidence of national athletes were higher than state ($p < 0.05$), district ($p < 0.05$) and university athletes ($p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the level of self-confidence among state athletes was lower than national athletes ($p < 0.05$), and

higher than district ($p < 0.05$) and university level athletes ($p < 0.05$). In addition, the level of confidence of university level athletes was lower than national ($p < 0.05$), state ($p < 0.05$), and district athletes ($p < 0.05$).

TABLE 2: Pos Hock Tukey: Level of Self confidence among different categories of USM athletes

Categories According to Skills	National	State	District	School	N
National		*(2.3127)	* (2.1109)	* (4.4412)	17
State			* (2.1127)	* (2.3142)	20
District				*(2.5217)	23
University					18

* $p < 0.05$

The result showed that athletes in the categories of university skill exhibited lower level of self-confidence than categories of state and district, whereas national athletes showed the highest levels of self-confidence. In Malaysia, no research has been done involving these four categories of skill, so this research fails to compare with previous research. However, many researchers has been supported that elite athletes inherited high level of self-confidence (Jones, Hanton & Swain, 1994; Perry & William, 1998; Williams & Krane, 1998; Claudio & Laura, 2003; and, Hanton et al., 2003). Therefore self confidence was considered the most powerful strategies to enhance performance among elite athletes (Hardy, Jones & Gould, 1996).

4.2 Level of Self-Confidence among Gender

The independent t-test on Table 3, showed the level of self confidence of females athletes are lower ($\bar{x} = 29.2130$) than males ($\bar{x} = 42.1127$). Male athletes showed significantly high self-confidence than females, $t(7.211)$, $p < 0.01$.

TABLE 3. : Independent *t* test of gender on Self-Confidence Level

	Gender	Self-Confidence		
		Mean	<i>t</i> -test	p-Value
Level of Competitive Anxiety	Female	29.2130	7.211**	0.000
	Male	42.1127		

** $p < 0.01$

The result showed that the level of self-confidence of female athletes is lower than males. This result has received support from many researches done by Clifton & Gill, 1994; Krane & Williams 1994; Thatcher, Thatcher & Dorling, 2004; and, Cartoni, et al., 2005. Overall females exhibit lower level anxiety than males because of biological factors and their role in society.

5.0. CONCLUSION

The findings of the research determined that there are differences in the level of confidence, showed by different categories of Malaysian athletes. These differences were related to their level of skill. The results showed that elite or national athletes exhibited higher levels of confidence than non-elite athletes. High confident levels are very important in high sport performance. The result also shows that female athletes experienced lower level of self confidence compared males. Sport psychologists, sport counselors and coaches should use the present findings to recommend self confidence strategies to university and district level athletes to increase their level of performance.

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