Student-Athletes' Self Confidence Level During MASUM Competition
(Tahap Keyakinan Diri Pelajar-Atlet semasa Pertandingan MASUM)

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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 self 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 205 student-athletes, 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 student- athletes obtained higher score on self confidence compared females. Based on 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, MASUM, performance.

ABSTRAK

Keyakinan adalah kepercayaan bahawa seseorang atlet mampu melakukan sesuatu kerja dengan jayanya. Kebanyakan ahli penyelidik mendapati keyakinan yang tinggi boleh meningkatkan pencapaian atlet elit. Sebaliknya, keyakinan yang rendah boleh memberi kesan pencapaian yang rendah pada atlet atau pasukan. Atlet elit dikenali dengan tahap keyakinan diri yang tinggi. Walaubagaimanapun, kajian yang telah dilakukan terhadap atlet bukan elit masih kurang. Kebanyakan kajian lepas, hanya tumpukan pada atlet elit dan mengabaikan atlet yang kurang berjaya. Dengan demikian, tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk membandingkan tahap keyakinan diri terhadap atlet yang terdiri dari pelbagai kemahiran. Kajian ini juga akan membandingkan tahap keyakinan diri antara jantina. Sebanyak 205 pelajar-atlet terlibat dalam kajian ini sebagai responden. Kajian ini menggunakan Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2, yang terdiri dari 27 item dan ia dijalankan semasa pertandingan MASUM (Majlis Sukan Universiti Malaysia). Dapatan menunjukkan atlet nasional atau negara memperolehi purata skor yang tertinggi, manakala atlet mewakili universiti dan daerah adalah terendah. Selain itu, dapatan juga menunjukkan atlet lelaki mencapai purata skor yang lebih tinggi jika dibandingkan dengan perempuan. Berdasarkan kajian ini, adalah disarankan kepada ahli psikologi sukan, kaunselor sukan dan jurulatih, untuk menyediakan program yang sesuai supaya dapat meningkatkan keyakinan diri atlet perwakilan daerah, universiti dan golongan perempuan.

Kata kunci: Keyakinan diri, atlet elit, atlet bukan elit, MASUM, pencapaian.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of the MASUM (Sport between Universities) competition is to integrate various universities into sport activities. The MASUM (Sport between Universities) competition is very tough since 20 universities in Malaysia participate every year. Their main aim of every student-athlete in MASUM competition is to win their university as champion. However not every athlete or every university can perform to the highest level.

Those universities, which compete at MASUM are Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM), Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM), Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT), Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM), Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP), Uinversiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP), Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UNISZA), Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia (UPNM), Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK) (Majlis Sukan Universiti Malaysia, 2012).

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 prepare 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). Furthermore, 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 muscled tension (Ampofo-Boateng, 2009; Weinberg & Gould, 2011). Therefore many research showed that high self confidence has a tendency to increase athletes' performance.

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. In other words, 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. More research are needed to give us a better understanding on the level of self confidence among 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.

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.

METHODS

The participants of this study were recruited during MASUM (Sport between Universities) competition. 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 sample consisted of 205 student-athletes, with national athletes (N=55), state athletes (N=72), district athletes (N=31), and university athletes (N= 47).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Level of self-confidence among different skills

One way ANOVA showed significant differences of level of self-confidence among categories of MASUM athletes, $F_{(3,205)} = 17.221$, $p<.01$ (Table 1).

TABLE 1. Level of self confidence among different categories of MASUM athletes

Categories According of Skills	Self-Confidence	
	Mean	Value-F
National	23.1445	
State	21.5617	17.221*
District	18.8127	
University	14.3121	

* $p <0.05$

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 ($p<0.05$) during MASUM competition. 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 self confidence of university level athletes was lower than national ($p<0.05$), state ($p<0.05$), and district athletes ($p<0.05$) druing the MASUM competition.

TABLE 2. Pos Hoc Tukey: Level of self confidence among different categories of MASUM athletes

Categories According to Skills	National	State	District	School	N
National		*(2.1518)	* (2.4531)	* (4.2212)	55
State			* (2.1127)	* (2.7717)	72
District				*(2.0121)	31
University					47

*$p<0.05$

The result showed that MASUM 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).

Overall, the result showed that the lower skill categories of athletes, has lower self confidence. In other words, the less experience athletes have, the lower their self confidence evident. This phenomenon can be explained through the self efficacy theory. Self-efficacy is a person's belief that he or she has the ability or what it takes to do well in sports (Ampofo-Boateng, 2009). There is a strong positive relationship between self confidence and self efficacy. Athletes with low self confidence have a lower self efficacy. Athletes with high self-efficacy, achieve better in sports performance than athletes with low self-efficacy. Athletes, who posses low self efficacy, will experience negative emotions and thinking, high level of stress and anxiety (Ampofo-Boateng, 2009; Chemers, Hu, & Garcia 2001), which can affect their self confidence. Improving self-efficacy among university ranking athletes can increase their level of self confidence. University ranking athletes should expose themselves more into sports competitions, so that their experiences in sports can be increased. Experience and practice in sports can lead to perfection and increase self confidence among athletes.

Level of self-confidence among gender

One way ANOVA showed significant differences of level of self-confidence among categories of MASUM athletes, $F_{(3,205)} = 17.221$, $p < .01$ (Table 1)

TABLE 3. : Independent t test of gender on self-confidence level of MASUM athletes

Gender	Self-Confidence		
	Mean	t-test	p-Value
Female	37.1147	5.378**	0.000
Male	45.5121		

**$p < 0.01$

The result showed that the level of self-confidence of female athletes is lower than males during MASUM competition. This result has received support from many researches (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. Dominant gender ideology naturalizes the idea that masculinity is associated with sports. Men with power, energy and ability perform well in sports, which increase their self efficacy. Contrary, women defined as femininity, with the limited range of physical skill development and energy, decrease their self efficacy. The differences in this biological factors play an important role in determining the level of self confidence according to gender.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the research determined that there are differences in the level of self confidence, showed by different categories of Malaysian athletes during MASUM competition. These differences were related to their level of skill. The results showed that elite or national athletes exhibited higher levels of self-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 sport performance during MASUM competition. Cognitive strategies, such as imagery and self talk can be used by athletes

to improve their self confidence. Besides that, athletes should use previous success as a springboard for more success, in regaining their self confidence. An optimal training programme that prepares athletes to acquire all the important skills that are essential for superior performance can boost their self confidence.

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