RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONAL EMOTIONAL REGULATION ON PERFORMANCE OF UNIVERSITY ATHLETES IN NORTH-CENTRAL NIGERIA

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Abstract

In the field of sport, repeated and regular physical skills training and practice is not considered as the only key factor for achieving peak performance among athletes. Apart from physical, tactical abilities and professional skills, psychological characteristics are vital ingredients for athletic success. This study therefore examined the influence of interpersonal emotional regulation on performance of University athletes in North-Central Nigeria. Ex-post facto research design was used for the study. The study population comprised University athletes in North-Central Nigeria. Voluntary and quota sampling techniques were used to select fifty athletes (50) from six (6) sports. The research instrument was standardize modified Sport Emotional-Reaction Profile Questionnaire (SERP). Multiple regression statistic was used to analyze the data. Based on the findings, there was significant relationship among individual attraction (group), group integration (task) and confidence and performance of the University athletes. The study recommends that to improve university athletes' performance, coaches should motivate the athletes by using positive interpersonal emotional strategies such as praises and thumbs up to reinforce good performances. Furthermore, emphasis should not be solely on physical training but should also incorporate psychological strategies.

Keywords: Inter-personal emotional regulation, university athletes' performance

INTRODUCTION

Competition can bring out the best or the worst in athletes, and the psychological demands are especially high when individuals or teams are striving to achieve common group goals. When physical skills are evenly matched, it is often the competitor with stronger mental approach that is able to control his or her mind before and during events, who wins. Emotion is recognized as being vital to the performance of athletes. Emotion can be defined as brief positive or negative feeling occurring in response to meaningful or important situation, which can influence mood states. Mix of emotion such as fear, anger, joy and surprise are commonly experienced in sport. Researchers have established that athletes' experiences and performances in sport are influenced by emotions and how emotions are regulated (Balk, Adriaanse, De Ridder & Evers, 2013; Nicholls, Perry, & Calmeiro, 2014).

Researchers in sport psychology have also adopted intrapersonal perspectives to understand athletes' emotional experiences and how emotion regulation impacts their own preparation and performance in sport (Tamminen & Gaudreau, 2014). However, studies have documented the ways that athletes perceive their emotions are influenced by others and the ways that athletes attempt to regulate the emotions of their teammates (Palmateer & Tamminen, 2018).

Emotion regulation could be viewed as an individual's ability to realize own goals through the control, observation, evaluation, and adaptation of his/her inner and outer emotional responses. This description views regulation and adaptation of emotional responses not only as a strategy of self-regulation, but also as a means of interpersonal processes involved in participating in relationships. Emotion regulation as a process encompasses awareness of what emotions one is feeling, when these emotions are being experienced, how they are being experienced, and how they express themselves.

Gross' emotion regulation model (2001) is founded on the pillars of reappraisal and suppression in the process of emotion regulation. Before providing an emotional response to a situation, an individual develops cognitive strategies to deal with it and reevaluates the situation with their feelings as well as the meaning of the situation itself. This evaluation allows for an emotional shift in the individual Efforts geared toward preventing and suppressing the expression of emotions cause physiological changes in the individual. For example, it has been shown that those who embark on the path of suppression in regulating their emotions may appear to have more contracted veins than others (Gross, 2001).

Interpersonal emotion regulation (IER) refers to social interactions that are intended to improve or worsen the emotions of others (Niven, Totterdell, & Holman, 2009). Interpersonal emotion regulation has been associated with emotional and motivational outcomes for athletes (Tamminen, Gaudreau, MceEwen & Crocker, 2016). More broadly, it is a process regulated by the scope of social relations in which the emotional response to various stressful situations is experienced in tandem with others.

Qualitative findings suggest interpersonal emotion regulation among teammates is associated with performance, and that it is also important to consider interpersonal emotion regulation interactions within the context of athletes' social environment. Athlete tends to perform

excellent if there is a good social interaction among their teammate. Since teammate plays major role in enhancing team performance by regulating emotion of members. A study classified athletes' and coach's interpersonal emotional regulation strategies according to verbal and behavioural dimensions that included the use of humour, distraction, goal setting, and positive appraisals (Friesen, Devonport, Sellars & Lane, 2015). Athletes in this study described several examples of interpersonal emotional regulation strategies intended to worsen a teammate's emotions, such as ignoring teammates, using threats or punishments, and pointing out performance problems to embarrass them.

A further perspective offered by Campo, et.al. (2017) adopted Gross' process model of emotion regulation to examine interpersonal emotional regulation. The athletes reported regulating their teammates' emotions by engaging in extrinsic situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and extrinsic response modulation. Collectively, these studies represent an accumulating body of research and various theoretical perspectives that describe a number of strategies athletes use to try and regulate the emotions of their teammates.

Self-determination also plays vital role in regulating behavior of others. Athletes who are self-determined are more likely to regulate their own behavior by themselves than by others. Before you are self- determined you must be self-aware because self-awareness is the first step towards taking control of oneself or the game. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) proposes that motivation can be categorized according to whether it is driven by reasons emanating from the self, or in response to external demands (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The theory proposes a series of motivational regulation types graded on a continuum of autonomy.

Team cohesion is the strength and extent of interpersonal connection existing among the members of a group. It is this interpersonal bond that causes members to participate readily and remain motivated to accomplish the set goals. Cohesive teams have an attitude of "we-ness". Team cohesion is commonly broken down into two main components, task cohesion and social cohesion, which have been associated with a variety of positive outcomes among athletes, including competition appraisals, sport satisfaction, motivation, and performance outcomes (Martin, Paradis, Eys, & Evans, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

It has been affirmed that intrapersonal emotional regulation are vital factors predicting success of team during and after competition. During play, athletes communicate with one another which lead to use of word that may enhance or hinder the performance of the team. Teammate plays major role in enhance their team performance by regulating emotion of the team. For example, team sport athletes have indicated that, prior to competing, they perceive interactions with teammates to influence their own cognitions, emotions, and motivation for competition (Wolf, Herenberg, Tamminen & Schmitz, 2018).

The psychological factors which include emotional regulation, personality, behavior etc., are given less affection by the coach. This has posed some problem to athletes by not having a clue to how to deal with problems associated with the mind especially in regulating their emotion and others. Basic knowledge of characteristics of certain sport and a deep understanding of the athlete's thoughts, behaviours and emotional state in pre, during and after competition are necessary to help athletes achieve peak performance. Coaches should interact with their athletes as friend to find out about the athlete's interest, hobbies, and ways of thinking and values to mention few, because joy, sadness, fear, dejection, apprehension and anger are all part of emotional issues encountered by athletes daily which effect their performance.

Sport emotional-reaction skills such as confidence, sensitivity, assertiveness and personal accountability are the major factors regulation the emotion of an athlete before, during and after competition in order to achieve optimum result. In Nigeria, most coaches and athletes do not take cognizance of regulating their emotion and that of others using the cognitive process. However, can interpersonal emotional regulation effect team performance? This study therefore examined the relationship of interpersonal emotional regulation on team performance of university athletes the North-Central Zone of Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested

1. There is no significant relationship between individual attraction to group (task) and performance of university athletes in North-Central Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between group integration (task) and performance of university athletes in North-Central Nigeria.

3. There is no significant relationship between confidence and performance of university athletes in North-Central Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The ex-post facto research design was used for this study. The population for this study was male and female university athletes in North-Central Nigeria. The sample comprised 50 respondents drawn from six sports (athletics, volleyball, basketball, soccer, badminton and table tennis). The voluntary and quota sampling techniques was adopted for this study.

The research instrument was modified Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ) and Sports Emotion-Reaction Profile Questionnaire (SERP). The instrument was close-ended modified Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Responses of modified Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ) and Sports Emotion-Reaction Profile Questionnaire (SERP) were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic Variables of Respondent

Demographic Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Genders of Respondents	Male	22	44.0
	Female	28	56.0
	Total	50	100.0
Age of Respondents	18 - 21 years	13	26.0
	22-25 years	30	60.0
	26 years and above	7	14.0
	Total	50	100.0
Sport Played by Respondents	Athletics	8	16.0
	Soccer	12	24.0
	Badminton	10	20.0
	Table tennis	6	12.0
	Volleyball	6	12.0
	Basketball	8	16.0
	Total	50	100.0
Numbers of Years Respondent Played Sport	One year	13	26.0
	Two years	12	24.0
	Three years	12	24.0
	Four years	4	8.0
	Five years and above	9	18.0
	Total	50	100.0

Table one presents demographic information on gender, age, sport and length of years in playing sport. The table revealed that 22 (44%) were male and 28 (56%) were female. On age, 12

(26%) fall within 18-21years, 30 (60%) were within 22-25years and 7 (14%) fall within 26years and above. Furthermore, out of a total 50 respondents, 8 (16%) take part in Athletics, 12 (24%) were Soccer players, 10 (20%) played badminton, 6 (12%) played Table tennis, 6 (12%) were volleyball players and 8 (16%) were Basketball players. The table also revealed that out of a total 50 respondents, 13 (26%) have played for one year, 12 (24%) have played for two years, 12 (24%) for three years, 4 (8%) have been in the game for four years and 9 (18%) for five years and above.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between individual attractions to group (task) and performance of university athletes in North-Central Nigeria.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance showing Individual Attraction to Group (task) and Performance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	59.904	3	19.968	5.044	.004
	Residual	182.116	46	3.959		
	Total	242.020	49			

P<0.05

Table 3: Model showing for Individual Attraction to Group (task) Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square change	F change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.498	.248	.198	1.98973	.248	5.044	2	46	.004

Tables two and three revealed the measurement of variance accounted for in the overall regression equation. The table presents the analysis of variance for individual attraction to group task on performance. Social environment and performance yielded a coefficient of multiple correlation of 0.498, 0.004 (P<0.05) and R Square (R^2) of 0.248. The table also shows that analysis of variance for multiple regression data yielded an F-ratio of 5.044 (significant at 0.005 alpha level). With this result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between individual attraction to group (task) and performance of university athletes in North-Central Nigeria was rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between group integration (task) and performance of university athletes in North-Central Nigeria.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance showing Group Integration (task) and Performance

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	20.781	3	6.927	1.626	.196
1	Residual	195.939	46	4.260		
	Total	216.720	49			

P<0.05

Table 5: Model showing for Group Integration (task) Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square change	F change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.31	.096	.037	2.06387	.096	1.626	3	46	.196

Tables four and five revealed the measurement of variance accounted for in the overall regression. The table showed the analysis of variance for group integration (task) on performance. Social environment and performance yield a coefficient of multiple correlation of 0.310, 0.196 (P<0.05) R Square (R^2) of 0.096. The table also shows that analysis of variance for multiple regression data yield an F-ratio of 1.626 (significant at 0.05 alpha level). With this result, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between group integration (task) and performance of university athletes North-Central Nigeria was accepted.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between confidence and performance of University of Ilorin athletes I North-Central Nigeria.

P<0.05

Table 6: Analysis of Variance showing confidence and Performance

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	475.991	3	158.664	18.748	.000
1	Residual	380.825	45	8.463		
	Total	856.816	48			

Table 7: Model showing for confidence Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square change	F change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.745	.556	.526	2.90909	.556	18.748	3	45	.000

Tables six and seven revealed the measurement of variance accounted for in the overall regression. The table showed the analysis of variance for confidence on performance which yielded a coefficient of multiple correlation of 0.745, 0.000 ($P<0.05$) R Square (R^2) of 0.556. The table also shows that analysis of variance for multiple regression data yield an F-ratio of 18.748 (significant at 0.05 alpha level). With this result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between confidence and performance of university athletes in North-Central Nigeria was rejected.

DISCUSSIONS

Findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between individual attraction to group (task) and performance of university athletes North-Central Nigeria. Carron, Colman and Eheeler (2012) suggested that in the light of the conceptual nature of the construct, group integration-task should have strongest relationship with performance. They further pointed out that, for groups generally, although cohesiveness may lead the group to perform better, the tendency for the group to experience grater cohesiveness after successful performance may be even stronger.

The outcome of this study also revealed that there was significant relationship between group integration (task) and performance of university athletes in Kwara State. Furthermore, the assumption that all random errors are independent, normally distributed, and homoscedastic is violated analysis at the individual level implies that there is no expected systematic influence of variables at the higher level which is clearly not the case with data measuring cohesion in groups (Heck, 2001).

Findings also revealed that there is significant relationship between confidence and performance of university athletes in Kwara State. Previous finding has indicated that high levels of sports confidence are associated with superior performance (Weinberg & Gould, 2011). Javeed, Tabassum, Burki, Ishaq and Butt (2022) affirmed that an increasing body of research indicates that the main mediating component of aspirations for success is an athlete's opinion of his/her own competence or level of self-confidence.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn.

1. There was significant relationship between individual attraction to group task and performance of university athletes in North-Central Nigeria.
2. There was no significant relationship between group integration (task) and performance of university athletes in North-Central Nigeria.
3. There was significant relationship between assertiveness and performance of university athletes in North-Central Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made to all stakeholders handling university athletes in the study area.

1. University coaches in North-Central Nigeria should motivate athletes by using positive interpersonal emotional strategies such as commendation when they exhibit good performance. This will improve the morale of the athletes to perform better.
2. University coaches in North-Central Nigeria should not only emphasize physical training but should also incorporate psychological strategies on athlete development. This will help the athletes to overcome psychological issues such as anxiety and lack of confidence to mention few.
3. Sports psychology professionals should be involved in teaching confidence skills to the university athletes in North-Central Nigeria to assist them in reaching their full potential and to overcome their weaknesses.
4. Management of universities in the North-Central Nigeria should provide appropriate medical and psychological services to their athletes by identifying and assisting them in their areas of need to boost performance.

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