DOI: https://doi.org/10.67203/gjhrr.2021.itecusn3

https://abueducationjournals.com/gjhrr

IMPACT OF SELF-EFFICACY COMPONENTS ON ATHLETES' PEAK PERFORMANCE IN NATIONAL SPORTS FESTIVAL IN SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

Coaches play a significant role in motivating and enhancing the performance of their team athletes. The main goal of this study was to examine the impact of self-efficacy components in athletes' performance in the National Sports Festival (NSF) in South West, Nigeria. A descriptive research design was adopted for this study. The population comprised all athletes from Lagos, Ogun and Oyo State in Southwest Nigeria. The sample size selected for the study were (114 athletes) both in track and field, ball games, combat sports, racket games and swimming using a stratified sampling technique. A standardized and self-developed questionnaire by Bandura (1994) was the instrument used for the study. The questionnaire used in the pre-test were coded and analyzed using the Cronbach-Alpha reliability coefficient to establish the internal consistency of the instrument and the result obtained was 0.84. Simple percentage and frequency counts were used for the demographic data of the respondents while inferential statistics of multiple regression were used to analyzing the data at a 0.05 level of significance. The study concludes that two of the variables tested (vicarious experience and past performance accomplishments) significantly improved the performance of athletes in the National Sports Festival while verbal persuasion was not significant. The study recommends that coaches should focus on utilizing self-efficacy as mental skill techniques to help athletes in their interpretation of past performance accomplishments as facilitative.

Keywords: Self-efficacy components, enhanced performance, Athletes in National Sports Festival.

Introduction

Most professional and amateur athletes are conscious that their psychological state has an influence on their sports performance. Athletes must have the relevant physical skills and capabilities to perform, but some athletes are less confident than others that they can perform skillfully, cope with performance pressure, or sustain the hard work necessary to perfect the skills. Coaches, as well, can influence the team and individual confidence through their expectations, behaviour, and interactions with their athletes. Several factors can influence an athlete's performance in sport. Successful performance in sport is based on recognizing key psychological factors associated with performance in particular sports and ensuring that they are worked upon right from the beginning of training and preparation for competitions. Thus, psychological testing can help identify individuals' psychological strengths and weaknesses, and the coaches can act on that knowledge in implementing an appropriate training programme (Leffingwell, Durand- Bush, Wirzberg & Cada, 2005).

Oftentimes, athletes attribute their unimpressive performance to physical skills and make frantic attempts to correct such through devoting more time to the practice of physical skills. However, they hardly realize that a low level of physical skills is not the major problem, rather lack of mental skills such as loss of concentration and beliefs in oneself. It has been affirmed that mental toughness

has to do with an athlete's ability to cope with pressure, determination to persist in the face of adversity and mental resilience (Bull, Shambrook, James & Brooks 2005; Gucciardi, Gordon & Dimmock, 2008). Mental and emotional components often overshadowed and transcend the purely physical and technical aspects of performance.

A considerable amount of research has also shown that self-efficacy beliefs are related to performance. Self-efficacy is considered to be one of the most influential psychological constructs mediating achievement striving in sport (Feltz, 1984). According to Redmond (2009), there are four sources of information that people base their efficacy judgment on performance outcomes, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and physiological feedback. These components help individuals decide whether or not they can accomplish certain tasks.

McAnley and Blissmer (2002) studies have indicated that higher levels of self-efficacy are associated with superior performance. Thus, the perception of one's ability to perform a task successfully has a consistent impact on actual performance. Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy has been adapted to explain behaviour within several disciplines of psychology, and it has formed the theoretical basis adopted for the most performance-oriented research in self-confidence and sport. Confidence is a person's general feeling, perception or belief that can be successful in performing skill and meeting task demands. Self-efficacy beliefs reflect a person's feelings not about what he/she can do but rather about what he/she has already done. Self-efficacy is enormously important in an exercise setting and for changing and adhering to desirable, healthy behaviours.

According to Bandura (1992, 1997), the degree of specificity at which self-efficacy is measured could be determined by the nature of the situation at hand and the nature of the situation or task (or both situation and task) to which one wishes to generalize or predict. Self-efficacy beliefs are specific to the district of functioning rather than representing an overall global trait. Self-efficacy determines how much effort people will expend on an activity, how long they will persevere when confronting obstacles, and how resilient they will be in the face of adverse situations. High self-efficacy helps create feelings of peacefulness in approaching difficult tasks and activities.

Conversely, people with low self-efficacy may believe that things are tougher than they are which creates the belief that promotes anxiety, stress, depression and a narrow vision of how best to solve a problem (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy belief enhances human accomplishment and well-being in numerous ways. It influences the choices and the courses of action they pursue. They are reflected in an individual's perception about his or her ability to perform a given task or behaviour (efficacy expectation) and his or her belief about the consequences of behaviour performance (outcome expectation). Self-efficacy, the perception of one's ability to perform a task successfully is a situation-specific form of self-confidence.

In a meta-analysis of 114 studies, Stajkovic and Lathem (2008) examined the relationship between self-efficacy and sport-related task performance. Their findings revealed there was an average weighted correlation between self-efficacy and sport-related performance. The findings have significant implications for professional sports managers because programmes aimed at developing a resilient sense of efficacy among athletes can breed significant dividends in performance accomplishments and personal well-being. Applying self-efficacy components is one of the many ways that athletes and coaches can find themselves victorious. Research also indicates that the factor most consistently distinguishing highly successful from less successful athletes is confidence (Jones & Hardy, 1990, Vealey, 2005). In addition, Gould, Greenleafs, Lauer and Ching (1999) found that confidence (efficacy) was among the chief factors influencing performance. Scholars have discussed self-efficacy components on athletes peak performance in so many dimensions. However, Nigeria coaches have paid little or no attention to these self-efficacy components and their impact on the performance of athletes. The need to fill the gap in knowledge. Therefore, this study focused on the impact of the self-efficacy component on athletes peak performance in the Nation Sports Festival in South-West Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

This study was designed to investigate the impact of self-efficacy components on athletes peak performance in the National Sports Festival in South-West Nigeria. The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Assess the level of knowledge of the respondents about self-efficacy components in their performance.
2. Describe the impact of the component on the attitude of the respondent.
3. Perceived types of components of self-efficacy affecting the respondent.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relative contribution of the independent variables (past performance accomplishment, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion) on athletes' peak performance in the National Sports Festival in South-West Nigeria.
2. There is no significant joint contribution of the independent variables (past performance accomplishment, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion) on athletes' peak performance in the National Sports Festival in South –West

Material and Methods

The sample size for this study comprised 114 athletes (96 male and 18 female) elite athletes who have represented their states in previous sports festivals drawn from three states in the Southwestern part of Nigeria (Lagos, Ogun and Oyo). The athletes were drawn from track and field, ball games, racket games, combat sports and swimming. The sample was selected using a stratified sampling technique. The respondents signified intention to participate based on availability and willingness to partake in the study. A standardized instrument developed by Bandura, 1994 (Self-efficacy Questionnaire, (SEQ)) with 17items and 4 options from (very true – Not at all true) with reliability co-efficient result of 0.85 obtained. Data were collected with the help of nine trained research assistants. The data were analyzed using frequency count and percentage for the demographic data while inferential statistic of multiple regression was employed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Ho 1: There is no significant joint contribution of the independent variables (past performance accomplishment, vicarious experiences, and verbal persuasion) on athletes' peak performance in the National Sports Festival in South-West Nigeria

Table 1: Multiple regression analysis on the joint contribution of the independent variables (past performance, vicarious experience, and verbal persuasion)

Model	**R**	**R square**	**Adjusted R square**	**Std. Error of the estimate**
1	.854	.730	.717	6.30449

Model	**SUM of square**	**Df**	**Mean square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	11605.894	5	2321.179	58.399	.000
Residual	4292.632	108	39.747		
	15898.526	113			

a. Dependent variable self-efficacy

b. Predictors: (Constant), past performance accomplishment, vicarious experience, and verbal persuasion.

The result in table one shows that the joint effects of the independent variables significantly contributed to the dependent variable. The R-value of 0.854 indicates that there is a positive high degree of relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. This indicates that improved measure of the independent variables is significant in enhancing the performance of athletes. The R^2

value accounted for 73% of the variance for the equation. The significance of the composite contribution was tested at a < 0.05 alpha level. The table also shows the analysis of variance for the regression yielded an F-ratio of 58.399 which is significant at 0.05 alpha level. This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance.

Ho 2: There is no significant relative contribution of the independent variables (past performance accomplishment, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion) athletes peak performance in the National Sports Festival in South-West Nigeria.

Table 2; Relative contribution of the independent variables (past performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, and verbal persuasion)

Model	**Unstandardized Coefficient**		**Standardized Coefficient**	**T**	**Sig.**
	B	**Std Error**	**Beta**		
(Constant)	5.375	2.764		1.944	.054
Vicarious experience	1.184	.135	.586	8.714	.000
Past performance accomplishment	1.791	.193	.553	8.751	.000
Verbal persuasion	.066	.181	.035	.387	.699

The results in table two revealed that two out of the three independent variables had a significant contribution on the performance of athletes in the National Sports Festivals. The results showed that vicarious experience (β=0.586, t=8.714, P=0.000 <0.05) and past performance accomplishment (β=0.552, t=8.751, P=0.000 <0.05) were found to be significant while verbal persuasion (β=0.035, t=0.387, P=0.000 <0.05) was not be significant.

Based on the findings, the most important and powerful source of self-efficacy for athletes is derived from their past performance accomplishments. Though the positive relationship between past performance accomplishment and self-efficacy beliefs is robust, Bandura (1997) warned successful athletes to be careful not to become complacent because letdowns after easy success and intensifications of effort after failures are events in which exceptional athletes who were supposed to win fell short and the "underdog" emerged with the victory. Compared to the other sources of self-efficacy, verbal persuasion had been the subject of considerably less research, the most popular line of inquiry on verbal persuasion as a source of efficacy beliefs has to do with evaluative feedback. The feedback given to an athlete can either undermine self-efficacy or boost it (Bandura, 1999).

A report by Chase, Feltz and Lirgg (2003) revealed that athletes often perceived a bouncing back or "were due" effect after the previous poor performance as a source of efficacy information. Loune and Colleagues (2002) affirmed that self-efficacy significantly decreased defeat. Similarly, Berger, Pargman, and Weinberg (2007) pointed out that failure was associated with less persistence and that perception of failure provoked perceptions of learned helplessness. The findings further revealed that vicarious experience (feedback) play important role in enhancing the performance of athletes. McCann, S. (2008), indicated the importance of modelling in relation to self-efficacy beliefs by noting that it is apparent that modelling can indeed have a profound effect not only on performance but also on psychological variables that may impact physical skills execution. Modelling and social comparison constitute the sources of efficacy information gained through vicarious experience.

Findings by Chase, Feltz and Lirgg (2003) showed that a modelling condition resulted in better performances (on free-weight signal lifts). The result showed that modelling lead to better acquisition performance and was the preferred intervention for individuals first learning motor skills. Typically,

informing athletes about their success is considered positive feedback whereas conveying failure is negative feedback. This manipulation of self-efficacy beliefs shows that success and failure increase and decrease self-efficacy, respectively. Bandura (1997) noted that altering efficacy beliefs by providing bogus feedback is an effective way to test the theoretical propositions regarding efficacy beliefs. The findings further showed that verbal persuasion is not a significant predictor of managing high-performance athletes. Compared to the other sources of self-efficacy, verbal persuasion had been the subject of considerably less research. The most popular line of imagery on verbal persuasion as a source of efficacy beliefs has to do with evaluative feedback. The feedback given to an athlete can either undermine self-efficacy or boost it (Bandura, 1999).

Conclusion

Based on the findings, this study concludes that vicarious experience and past performance accomplishments had significant relative contributions to athletes' performance while verbal persuasion was not significant. The study further concludes that there was a high positive significant correlation between vicarious experience, past performance accomplishments and verbal persuasion and athletes' performance. This is a pointer to the fact that coaches, team sports psychologists should focus particular attention on these vital variables while preparing athletes for contests

Recommendations

The following are recommended:

1. It should be noted that different sports involve different circumstances and require special mental skills that can interpret self-efficacy as facilitative. Thus coaches can be advised to focus on these mental skill techniques to help athletes in their interpretation of past performance accomplishment as facilitative to achieve peak performance.
2. Although, self-efficacy has been identified as a factor that could facilitate performance competition planning; team managers should direct particular attention to using this psychological construct in performance enhancement.
3. Coaches and team administrators should work with sports psychologists to create a conducive training environment for athletes by ensuring that psychological skills that could facilitate performance are included in the training regimen.

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