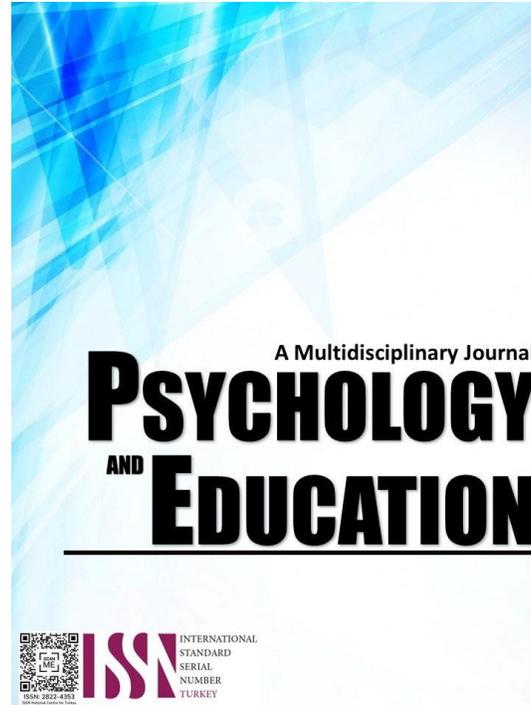


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Unveiling the Enigma: Effective Communication in Coach-Athlete Interaction

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Abstract

Effective communication can be defined as the ability to convey information, ideas, thoughts, or feelings clearly and accurately to others in a way that is understood and comprehended. The purpose of this study is to qualitatively explore situations in which athletes perceived communication with their coach to be essential and determine the effect of this communication on the athletes. A phenomenological study investigated athletes' experiences in a private institution. Furthermore, this study is anchored on the theory of Transactional Communication by Barnlund (1970), which seeks to describe communication as a process in which communicators generate social realities within social, relational, and cultural contexts. This theory views communication as a dynamic process where meaning is co-created between individuals. The study involved five (5) in-depth interviews with student-athletes in a private medical institution renowned for their excellence in education. The study employed thematic analysis to derive meaning from the lived experiences of the student-athletes. In education, this perspective emphasizes the importance of effective communication between teachers and students to facilitate learning. In this study, the researcher utilized an interview guide with self-made questions. The researcher used thematic analysis to interpret the data. Two major themes emerged as challenges: Encouraging positive behavior and experiencing psychological crises among athletes.

Keywords: *communication, coach-athlete interaction*

Introduction

Effective communication between coaches and athletes is fundamental to the success of sports teams at all levels, from local clubs to international competitions (Holt et al., 2017). However, despite its importance, communication breakdowns can often occur, leading to misunderstandings, conflicts, and ultimately, decreased performance. Various factors such as cultural differences, language barriers, and differing expectations can contribute to communication challenges between coaches and athletes (Jones & Harwood, 2015).

In the realm of international sports, specifically Brazil, communication dynamics within Brazilian sports teams revealing intricate challenges including language barriers, cultural nuances, and divergent coaching methodologies. These complexities create misunderstandings and tensions between coaches and athletes, impacting the team's ability to effectively strategize, train, and compete in international competitions. Silva and Santos (2014)

In the Philippines, a study by Santos and Reyes (2014) delved into communication dynamics within Philippine sports teams, revealing notable challenges such as language barriers, cultural differences, and inadequate feedback mechanisms. These factors contribute to misunderstandings and conflicts between coaches and athletes, ultimately affecting the team's overall performance and success in national and international competitions.

In Davao City, it boasts a vibrant sports community where athletes and coaches strive for excellence on local playing fields. However, amidst the spirited pursuit of athletic success, communication challenges often emerge, presenting hurdles that impact the effectiveness of coach-athlete interactions and the overall performance of sports teams within the region. delved into the communication dynamics within sports teams in Davao City, revealing notable obstacles such as language barriers, limited access to training facilities, and socio-economic disparities among athletes. (Garcia & Hernandez, 2016)

The purpose of this study is to develop a better understanding of the coach-athlete communication process. Given the scarcity of research on the coach-athlete communication process, linked to the communication process of the various sports setting. This study contributes toward developing the body of research available on communication processes in sports; therefore, there is an urgent need to conduct this study.

Methodology

This study qualitative research will utilize a phenomenological approach. According to Moser and Korstjen, (2017), qualitative research is a type of research design that explores and provides deeper insights into real-world problems. Phenomenology is an approach to research that seeks to describe the essence of a phenomenon by exploring it from the perspective of those who have experienced it (Martimianakis et al., 2015). In context with this study, the researcher will use this to determine the impact of effective communication acts on coach-athlete Interactions.

In addition, this study will be conducted within private schools and institutions renowned for their excellence in education services in Davao City. The study respondents consisted of five athletic students. In gathering data, the researcher will use a self-made questionnaire and will be analyzed using thematic analysis. According to Riger (2016) used thematic analysis to analyze qualitative

data, which involves searching for recurring ideas in a data set.

Results and Discussion

This section summarizes key findings and highlights themes from interviews and group discussions, offering a narrative to give meaning to participants' experiences.

Lived experiences of athletes on effective communication in coach-athletes interaction

From the data gathered, there were two significant themes I extracted from the in-depth interview. These are Encouraging positively.

Step 4. Figure Presentation of Clustered Themes and Emergent Themes

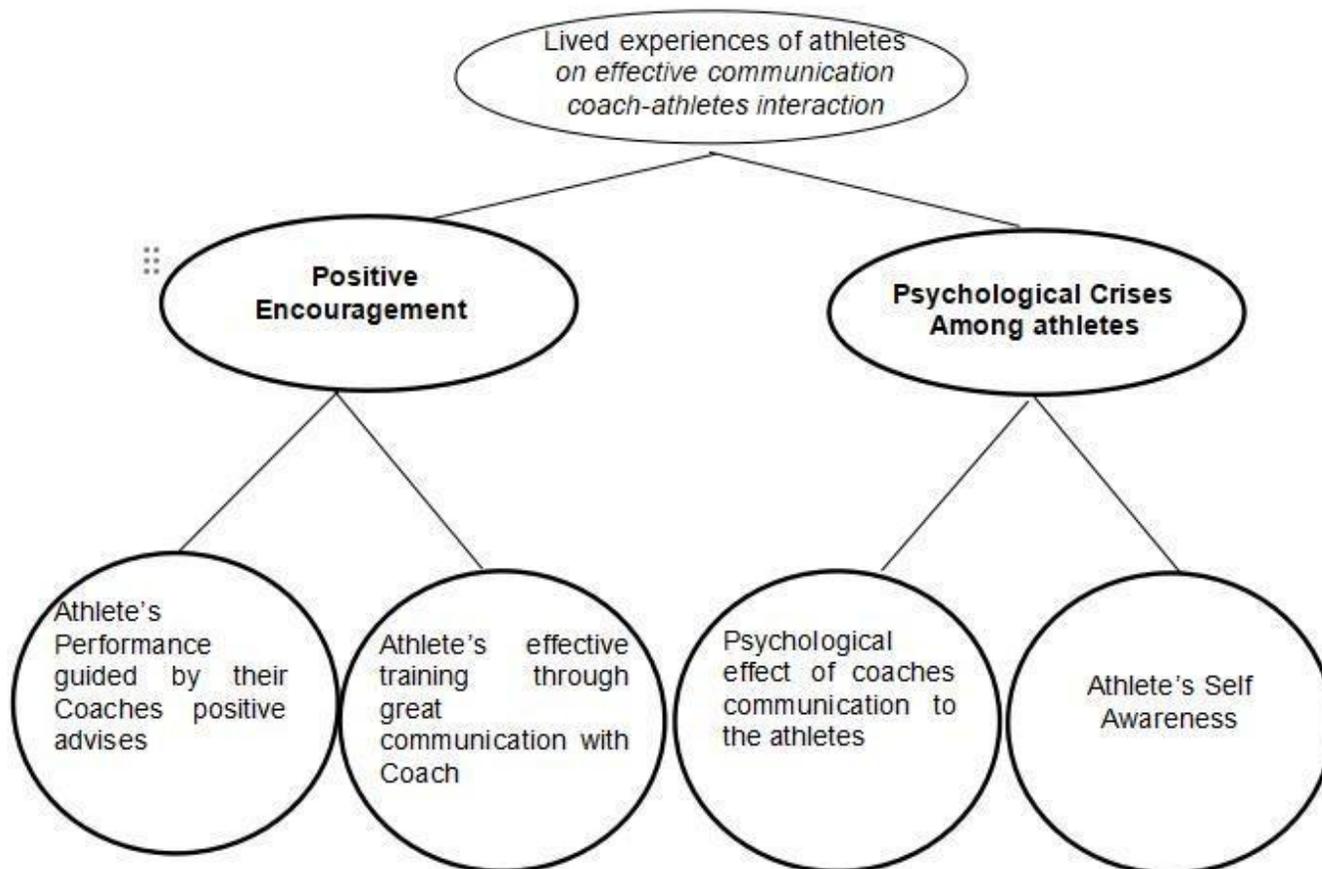


Figure 1. Emerging Themes in Lived experiences of athletes on effective communication in coach-athletes interaction

During interviews, athletes revealed an effective outcome with Positive Encouragement and Psychological crises among athletes. Under Positive Encouragement Two sub-themes emerged: Athlete’s Performance guided by their Coaches positive advises, and Athlete’s effective training through great communication with Coach. On the latter part, two sub-themes emerged as well under Psychological crises among athletes: Psychological effect of coaches communication to the athletes and Athlete’s Self Awareness.

Encouraging positively

As a teacher, I believe in the power of positive encouragement to nurture my students' confidence and motivation. By consistently affirming their efforts and celebrating their progress, I aim to create a supportive learning environment where each student feels valued and empowered to reach their fullest potential.

Through interviews, I've gained personal insights on how effective positive encouragement is. Numerous athletes stated that their coaches were able to support their performance through positive encouragement. Specifically, immediately after not performing well, athletes reported experiencing uncertainty about their thought process and decision-making ability. One speaker said:

“So, during that moment when we were almost losing in volleyball, our coach gave us motivational sentences to hype up the team because we seemed a bit down at that time. After that, she said that volleyball is a game “nga permi ka maghangad, dili mag duko”.. and is a sport where you always strive and never give up. Because of that, it felt like we won. That motivational phrase, though short, it had an impact on the team. “ - P1, IDI L20-26

This statement was also explained by (Wong, 2015, p. 182) which states that encouragement has been defined as the expression of affirmation through language or other symbolic representations to instill courage, perseverance, confidence, inspiration, or hope in a person. Furthermore, positive encouragement from coaches can have long-lasting effects beyond sports performance. Athletes who receive positive reinforcement from their coaches are more likely to develop higher self-esteem, greater self-efficacy, and improved mental well-being. These psychological benefits not only enhance athletes' athletic performance but also contribute to their overall personal development and success in life beyond sports.

Performing as an athlete

The coach-athlete communication might have an impact on the athletes with regards to their performance. In particular, coaches give great advises to athletes when facing challenges. The athletes mentioned:

“My coach has helped me a lot, for example, during practice when we play chess because sometimes there are wrong moves, so he advises me to try other moves to defend my pieces.” - P3, IDI L89-93

“So in a way that my coach has effectively helped me in my concerns is by giving me an advice of such things that would help me benefit and learn in a very effective way.” - P4, IDI L107-109

In the interview, it has become apparent that effective communication and advises coming from the coaches has impacted the overall performance of athletes. athletes who see their coaches as supportive and encouraging are more likely to experience higher levels of satisfaction, commitment, and performance in their respective sports. Moreover, positive advice from coaches has a profound influence on athletes' mindset, motivation, and self- confidence. This statement supports the study of (Weinberg & Gould, 2014), which states that Positive reinforcement serves to reinforce desirable behaviors and attitudes, fostering a culture of positivity, resilience, and perseverance within the team. This means that all of this benefits will be gained by athletes.

Athlete's Training

From my perspective as a researcher, Training is important because it helps athletes get stronger and faster. It also teaches athletes how to work better with their teammates on the field. participants discussed how coach- athlete communication could determine the entire team's training environment .He mentioned:

“Perhaps the most helpful communication skill that I truly understand is when my coach provides an example of what I want to know in training sessions. For instance, if I ask, “sir, unsaon pag execute sa jump serve, sir?” My coach would demonstrate and teach us to clearly see the correct form and posture.”- P1, IDI L36-40

This statement was explained by Cook (2012) he states that functional training refers to the training of partial chains and connections in the human motion chain that involves completing specific target actions, including multi- dimensional motion and stability training activities that meet the characteristics of particular target actions. This corresponds to the statement of the speaker stating that his coach show how to do a proper execution of jump serve.

Experiencing psychological crises among athletes

The behavior of the coaches has a huge impact on the intensity of the affective response experienced by the athlete. In other words, the communicative acts of a coach may assist or interfere with the athlete's ability to find their optimal zone of arousal and peak performance under pressure. Findings in this study suggest that communicative acts of a coach benefit athletes when they create a positive climate that focuses on their strengths and increases their confidence through the experience of success.

During my interview, one speaker mentioned:

“I think he listens to what I have to say on my problems and after he listens to the concerns that I have, he does her... I mean, he is able to take the steps that I need to get better. And then, that's it. “ - P1, IDI L 3-5

This was explained by Johnson, U., et.al (2017) which states that's psychological crises in sports represent significant challenges that athletes may face throughout their careers, impacting their mental health and performance. With this statement, the effective communication with their coaches, in which they shared their problems and challenges and receiving responses through listening and advises, Indicates great help with the athletes coping mechanism.

Psychological effect of communication in coaching athletes

During instances of psychological pressure such as a shoot-off where athletes are exposed to extreme pressure or in situations where the shooting time is prolonged due to uncertainty about their own decisions or techniques, communication with a coach might have an impact on the athlete's self- confidence and anxiety level. Coaches seem to play an important role in increasing an athlete's confidence level. When the coach changes the culture of “winning,” the results seem to be more positive. For example two participants said:

“So, our coach's support towards us is immense. When we play, he would say “okay ra ma mapilidi basta ma enjoy ang ano ang pagdula ug makalearn sa ano mga mali ng moves” - P3, IDI L 94-96

This statement was explained by Fletcher and Sarkar (2016) according to them, Through motivational speeches, pep talks, and personalized strategies for coping with pressure, coaches boost athletes' resilience and fortitude, instilling a belief in their capacity to overcome obstacles and thrive in high-pressure situations. This statement means that through their guidance, feedback, and unwavering support, coaches empower athletes to believe in their potential, cultivate resilience, and strive for excellence.

Being Self-aware

In sports, superior athletic performance is influenced by self-awareness. In particular, maintaining peak performance levels is at least partly dependent on the ability to recognize negative thoughts and feelings arising from problematic behaviors, which may impact the way athletes respond and adapt to the pressure to perform. During my Interview, participants feedback indicates that the communication with coaches during performance may lead to a positive or negative impact on the athlete's self awareness. To back up this statement one participant said:

"The communication between me and my coach is effective because it contributes to my growth and progress in volleyball. Without his guidance, I would feel stuck in a place resembling a beginner stage, which I do not desire. Thus, his advice is very important as well." - P1 IDI L14-18

This statement supports the study of Heaney et al. (2018) which states that self-awareness, along with self-regulation and self-talk, influenced athletes' performance and psychological well-being. Findings indicated that self-awareness was positively associated with athletes' ability to regulate their thoughts and emotions, leading to improved performance outcomes.

Conclusions

Based on the participants' answers, the following conclusions were drawn. This study advances research in coach-athlete relationships by providing an insight into the interactive effects of coaches' communication acts in sports, which is dynamic and can positively impact the athlete's physical and psychological performance during competitions as well as training. Coaches can refer to the results of this study to anticipate the appropriate situation that an athlete needs and to prepare a communication technique. Coaches need to establish the insight of personalized feedback and communication strategies to maximize an individual athlete's ability. Thus, the study may provide fundamental information to develop more coaching program by identifying the specific situations and contents of the positive coaches' communication acts perceived by athletes.

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