Enhancing Self-Confidence Through Positive Self-Talk

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ABSTRACT

There is no doubt that self-confidence plays a crucial role in an athlete's performance. A confident athlete performs at their peak, displaying exceptional skills and composure. However, when an athlete's confidence is low, their performance suffers significantly, falling far below their true potential.

If building self-confidence were as simple as telling an athlete to "BE CONFIDENT!" the process would be effortless. This study focuses on state-level track athletes competing in events running from 100m to 1500m and their confidence enhancement program. It examines the positive changes in self-confidence through a self-talk training program. A one-group pre-test and post-test experimental design was used to assess the actual impact of the psychological intervention on the self-confidence of male athletes from Kreeda Prabhodhani, Pune.

The study population consisted of 13 male track athletes, aged 16 to 20 years, competing in 100m to 1500m events at Kreeda Prabhodhani, Pune. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling method. Data were collected using the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 (CSAI-2) developed by Martens, Vealey, and Burton (1990), which specifically measures self-confidence. This scale includes a 9-item subscale, rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (none) to 4 (very much).

For data analysis, a paired-sample t-test was applied. The results indicated a significant difference and a positive correlation between self-confidence and the self-talk training program. This improvement in self-confidence was found to be statistically significant at the 0.01 level ($t = -5.91$, $df = 13$).

Keywords : Psychological intervention program, Self-confidence.

Introduction

The modern world is characterized by intense competition, which has led to heightened anxiety levels among individuals. As a result, the twentieth century has often been termed the "Age of Anxiety." This phenomenon extends beyond everyday life and permeates competitive sports, where anxiety can significantly affect an athlete's performance. With the increasing physical demands placed on athletes during training for international competitions, psychological stress has also intensified. Just like any other individuals facing high-pressure situations, athletes are prone to experiencing anxiety when participating in various competitive events.

Confidence plays a crucial role in an athlete's ability to perform at their best. When athletes feel self-assured, they can channel their abilities effectively and achieve superior performance. Conversely, a lack of confidence can magnify even minor setbacks, adversely impacting their overall performance. Research indicates that social support, such as encouragement from coaches and teammates, can act as a buffer against competitive stress and significantly enhance self-confidence. Moreover, structured psychological interventions, such as self-talk training, have been shown to yield long-term benefits in bolstering an athlete's confidence, even carrying into their professional careers.

Among the various psychological techniques used to enhance confidence, self-talk has been extensively studied. Motivational self-talk, which includes affirmations such as "Come on, you can do it!" or "I am ready for this challenge," has been found to have a more profound impact on self-confidence than instructional self-talk, which focuses on technical aspects like "Keep your eye on the ball." By instilling a positive internal dialogue, athletes can reinforce their belief in their abilities and mitigate performance-related anxiety.

Additionally, several studies have explored alternative methods to enhance self-confidence in athletes. For instance, techniques such as hypnosis, refinement of techniques, and self-modeling through video analysis have been examined for their effectiveness in boosting self-confidence levels. These interventions aim to refine an athlete's mental and physical preparedness, ultimately leading to improved performance outcomes.

The significance of psychological skill training, particularly relaxation training, in managing competitive anxiety and fostering confidence cannot be overstated. Athletes who undergo structured psychological training are more likely to develop resilience and cope effectively with the pressures of competition. The present study aims to examine the relationship between confidence, social support, and self-talk.

Specifically, it seeks to assess how self-talk and social support influence self-confidence in athletes. In this study, self-talk and social support serve as the manipulated variables, while self-confidence is the primary measured variable.

Understanding the impact of these psychological factors on athletic performance has broad implications for sports psychology and coaching strategies. If effective, interventions focusing on self-talk and social support can be integrated into training programs to help athletes achieve optimal performance. By fostering a culture of confidence and reducing anxiety, these strategies can contribute to the overall success and well-being of athletes in competitive sports.

Methods:

The present study examined the positive change in self-confidence through a self-talk training program among male track athletes from Kreeda Prabhodhani who competed at the state level. To achieve this objective, 13 male track athletes from Kreeda Prabhodhani, Pune, aged between 16 and 20 years, were selected. An experimental method was employed, where the athletes underwent a self-talk training program three days a week for a total of six weeks. The participants were selected using a purposive sampling method.

Research Method:

This study followed an experimental research design. A pre-test and post-test were conducted to collect data, followed by the application of an experimental research method. Data were gathered after the completion of the six-week self-talk training program. For the experimental phase, a two-group pre-test and post-test design was implemented.

Variables of the Study:

In this study, cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and self-confidence were the dependent variables, while the self-talk training program was the independent variable.

Population:

The population for this study consisted of athletes from Kreeda Prabhodhani, Balewadi, Pune, aged between 16 and 20 years.

Sample:

A convenience sampling method was used to select participants. A total of 14 students aged between 16 and 20 years were chosen for the study. The study followed a two-group pre-test and post-test experimental design.

Statistical Analysis:

Table 1.1 : *Paired Samples Statistics of Pre-Self –confidence and Post Self -Confidence*

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-Self –confidence	26.5714	14	2.73761	0.73166
Post Self –confidence	29.3571	14	1.21574	0.32492

Table 1.1 shows that mean Pre Self Confidence of Jump athletes at pre test level was 26.57 with Std Deviation 2.73 similarly mean post test level Self confidence of Jump athletes was 29.35 with S.D. 1.21.

Table: *1.2 : Paired Samples Correlations of Pre-Self –confidence and Post Self – Confidence*

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pre SC & Post SC	14	0.882	.000

Table1.2 show correlation between Pre-Test and Post Test Self Confidence Level was 0.88 which was statistically Significant at 0.01 level of significance.

Table 1.3 : *Paired Samples Test of Pre Self –confidence and Post Self –Confidence*

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pre SC Post SC	-2.78571	1.76193	.47090	-3.80302	-1.76841	-5.916	13	.000

Table 1.3 shows that the mean difference between the Pre-Self Confidence and Post Self Confidence was -2.78 with SD equal to 1.76. This difference was tested with pair sample t-test and it shows that this positive change in self-confidence was statistically significant at 0.01 level of significance. (t = -5.91, df=13)

Results

The study aimed to determine the positive impact of a self-talk training program on the self-confidence of track athletes. The results indicated that track athletes exhibited a high level of self-confidence following the self- talk training program.

Conclusion:

The positive changes in self-confidence after the self-talk training program were analyzed using a paired-sample t-test. The results indicated that the improvement in self-confidence was statistically significant at the 0.01 level ($t = -5.91$, $df = 13$).

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