

Athletic Coping Skills, Satisfaction, and Success in KAKOM Sport Competition

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to identify the relationship between athletic coping skills, satisfaction, and success in sports competitions. Two hypotheses have been tested. The research sample consisted of 66 athletes participating in the KAKOM 2023 edition sports tournament. Questionnaires included 28 items of the Athletic Coping Skills Inventory (ASCI-28), 29 items on the Sports Success Scale (SSS) and another 16 items from the Satisfaction Scale for Athletes (SSA). The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the athletes via Google form 3 hours before the games. After that, the collected data will be analysed in Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) Version 27 and generated the data. The internal consistency test demonstrated an alpha range of 0.76 to 0.88 and the outcomes of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test is significance level (sig.) or p-value exceeds 0.05, falling within the range of 0.134 to 0.430. The finding indicates a strong correlation ($r = .725$, $p = 0.001$) between coping skills and satisfaction. The finding also indicates a substantial correlation ($r = .798$, $p = 0.001$) between coping skills and success. Athletes who possess effective coping skills are more likely to experience higher levels of satisfaction in their sports participation and athletes with strong coping skills tend to achieve higher levels of success in their chosen sports. Future research should explore the nuances of this relationship, including the causal pathways, mediating factors, and the impact of interventions

Keywords: Malaysia, Coping Skills, Satisfaction, Success, Athlete

Introduction

Being a student-athlete is not an easy journey during foundation study in college. Student-athletes tend to face many stressful situations in order to balance their life in study and sport. As student-athletes, they will set their own goal setting to achieve in study and sport as their guidance to strive for success. At this point, they will easily be distracted by psychological issues such as anxiety, depression, overthinking, confusion, and hostility, if they do not know how to cope with these issues. This will lead to dissatisfaction and unable to achieve their

goal setting to strive for success. The National Education Philosophy is continued to the tertiary level by the Malaysia Matriculation Division. The aim of the Matriculation Division is to develop the potential of native students in the fields of science, technology, and professionalism through quality pre-university education to produce excellent human capital. In terms of developing students' potential, the Matriculation Division introduced a sports carnival named *Kanival Kokurikulum Matrikulasi (KAKOM)* in the year 2000.

Athletes who get gold medals in KAKOM competition will be selected to represent *Majlis Sukan Matrikulasi Malaysia (MSMM)* to *Sukan Asasi Malaysia (SAM)*. According to the previous data, the MSMM team ranked 8th place out of 9 teams involved in SAM 2020 with 1 silver and 2 bronze medals. During SAM 2022, the organizer only offered online games due to the pandemic and the MSMM team got 3 silver and 1 bronze. During SAM 2023, the MSMM team ranked the 3rd place out of 14 teams. Even though the MSMM team showed a bit of improvement in every SAM edition, the MSMM team needs room for improvement because they have a lot of potential athletes during KAKOM. So, it is compulsory for the team to find a solution to perform better in the next competition. KAKOM's athletes also have a lot of difficulties in arranging their time between study and training. As we know, the foundation syllabus is packed and needs to be done in a short time. So, students must attend the class without missing it in order to catch up with the syllabus.

Hence, it makes the student-athlete overwhelmed and exhausted to make their life balance between study and sport. Stress is an important contributor to depression and anxiety (Richards et al., 2016). Despite the fact that stress is the body's natural reaction to any kind of demand or threat when experienced at high levels, or over-amplified periods of time, it adversely influences mood, causes irritability, disrupts sleep patterns, and affects concentration. Just as physical training must be balanced with adequate recuperation to see progress, mental demands too and must be emphasized with strategies to support psychological well-being. The limited research on mental health in sports has offered some insights into the challenges faced by athletes whilst also the consequences for, and on, mental health and well-being (Gulliver et al., 2015; Hughes & Leavey, 2012; Rice et al., 2016). Research in Malaysia has shown that stressors such as problems at work, unhappy family relationships, and financial problems relate to depression (Rusli et al., 2008; Kader et al., 2014). However, none of the above research focused on athlete populations. Mental health is defined as "a state of successful performance or mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and the ability to adapt to change and to cope with adversity" (US Department of Health & Human Services, 1999).

Is also being highlighted by the World Health Organization (WHO), that mental health is "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community" (WHO, 2014). The 1996 National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) has estimated an increase in mental health prevalence among adults in Malaysia, pointing to the potential beginnings of a public health crisis. According to the 2015 NHMS, it was reported that the prevalence of mental health issues has increased nearly 3-fold, from 10.7% in 1996 to 29.2% in 2015. As the 2017 NHMS targeted the adolescent population in Malaysia, it was highlighted that one in five youths felt depressed, 10.5% had suicidal ideation and 6.68% had attempted suicide. However, there is no data shown on athletes' mental health thus far.

In this study, athletes from one of the KAKOM 2023 editions teams participate in the study to measure the influence of athletic coping skills towards satisfaction and success in sports competitions. The purpose of this research is to identify the relationship between athletic coping skills, satisfaction, and success in sports competitions. Two hypotheses have been tested

- H₁ There is a significant relationship between athletic coping skills and satisfaction,
H₂ There is a significant relationship between athletic coping skills and success

Methodology

The present study employs a quantitative research approach, including both a descriptive study to gather demographic data from respondents and an inferential study to compare the demographic features of the respondents. The research sample consisted of 66 athletes participating in the KAKOM 2023 editions. The sample size for the study was determined to be 80 individuals, using the guidelines proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The research instrument used in this study is a questionnaire including four distinct sections.

The demographic section of Part A encompasses information regarding the subject's age and gender. Sections B to D, on the other hand, consist of a total of 73 items. Among these items, 28 are specifically designed to assess athletic coping skills, as derived from the Athletic Coping Skills Inventory (ASCI-28). Additionally, 29 items are utilised to measure sports success using Sports Success Scale (SSS). Another 16 items are employed to access satisfaction, utilising the Satisfaction Scale for Athletes (SSA). The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the athletes via Google form 3 hours before the games. After that, the collected data will be analysed in Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) Version 27 and generated the data.

The internal consistency test demonstrated an alpha range of 0.76 to 0.88 in practical use. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2003), an item may be deemed highly reliable if its alpha value surpasses 0.60. Additionally, the study has a sample size of above 50, and the researchers have used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to assess the data distribution. Based on the outcomes of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality test, it is seen that the significance level (sig.) or p-value exceeds 0.05, falling within the range of 0.134 to 0.430. Consequently, it can be inferred that the data under investigation follows a normal distribution. As a consequence, the Pearson correlation was used to analyse and interpret the findings.

Result and Discussion

Demographic

A total of 66 athletes participating in the KAKOM 2023 edition sports tournament, and their demographic characteristics are shown in Table 1, categorised by gender and age. A total of 33 male participants (50.0%) and 33 female participants (50.0%) were included in the study. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents in relation to their age. The data reveals that those below the age of 18 include 30 individuals, accounting for 45.45% of the sample. Similarly, those above the age of 18 comprise 38 individuals, representing 54.55% of the total respondents.

Table 1

Frequencies and percentage of respondent's demographics

Variable		n	%
Gender	Male	33	50.0
	Female	33	50.0
Age	Below 18	30	45.45
	Above 18	36	54.55

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Based on the study's results, Table 2 indicates a strong correlation ($r = .725$, $p = 0.001$) between coping skills and satisfaction. The results also indicate a substantial correlation ($r = .798$, $p = 0.001$) between coping skills and success.

Table 2

Correlation of Variables

		Satisfaction	Success
Athletic Coping Skills	Pearson correlation Sig (2-tailed)	0.725** .001	0.798** .001
	N	66	66

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

H₁ There is a significant relationship between athletic coping skills and satisfaction

The alternative hypothesis was not rejected, indicating a significant positive correlation between athletic coping skills and satisfaction. According to Smith et al. (1995), coping strategies may help athletes manage stress in important moments of the match. Previous research showed that the psychological skills of athletes change depending on requirements in sports according to Bebetos (2015); Bebetos & Antoniou (2003); Young & Knight, (2014), as well as depending on the level of athletes (Géczi et al., 2008). Géczi et al., (2008) conducted research regarding the psychological state of hockey ice. The results of the ice hockey study showed that the more experienced ice hockey players had better control under stress and lower levels of anxiety than younger ice hockey players. Therefore, increasing a well-founded need to investigate the psychological skills of ice hockey players and prevent it from occurring maladaptive fatigue syndrome.

Athletic satisfaction has been defined as 'a positive affective state that results from a complex evaluation of structure, processes and outcomes associated with the athletic experience' (Riemer & Chelladurai, 1998). In other words, it is the extent to which one's athletic experiences meet one's personal standards. The larger the disparity between the two, the more dissatisfaction one is believed to experience. According to Riemer and Chelladurai (1998), they established a few specific criteria to classify the different factors of athletic satisfaction. First, it must be related to outcomes for example winning, goal attainment, or the process that result in outcome such as leadership. The second factor needs to reflect both individual and team outcomes and processes. This stems from the notion that certain outcomes desired by the individual may be derived only through the efforts and performance of their teammates (Riemer & Chelladurai, 1998). Consequently, an athlete may develop attitudes toward the team as an entity apart from themselves.

Athletic coping skills refer to the psychological strategies and techniques that athletes use to manage stress, adversity, and pressure in their sports performance. These coping skills can include goal setting, positive self-talk, relaxation techniques, visualization, and emotional regulation, among others. Athletes who have effective coping skills may experience greater satisfaction with their performance because they are better equipped to handle the challenges and pressures of competition. Thus, athletes who use coping skills effectively during their training and preparation may feel more satisfied with their overall athletic experience. Moreover, an athlete's ability to cope with the ups and downs of their sport can impact their overall satisfaction with participating in that sport. Athletes who use coping skills effectively are often better equipped to handle pressure and perform at their best, leading to higher levels of performance satisfaction. Therefore, athletes who feel confident in their coping abilities may enjoy their sport more and have greater motivation to continue participating.

When research establishes a significant relationship between athletic coping skills and satisfaction in sports and athletics, it opens up several important implications for further study and practical applications. Here are some research implications and potential directions for future research: a) Investigate the causal relationship between athletic coping skills and satisfaction. Determine whether improved coping skills lead to increased satisfaction, or if higher satisfaction leads to the development of coping skills. Longitudinal studies could be conducted to better understand the directionality of this relationship b) Explore how cultural and contextual factors may influence the relationship between coping skills and satisfaction. Different cultures may have unique approaches to coping with stress and achieving satisfaction in sports c) Conduct qualitative studies to gain deeper insights into athletes' personal experiences and narratives related to coping skills and satisfaction. This can provide a richer understanding of the psychological aspects involved.

H₂ There is a significant relationship between athletic coping skills and success

The alternative hypothesis was not rejected, indicating a significant positive correlation between athletic coping skills and success. Henschen (2000) gives a definition of maladaptive fatigue syndrome as physical and mental fatigue caused by a combination of stressors from mental, physical, and social sources. It is a multidimensional psychosocial state resulting in a withdrawal from a formerly enjoyable or motivating activity due to excessive fatigue, which is manifested in anger, hostility, anxiety, confusion, depression, sadness, lack of vigor, apathy, and mainly reduced performance in sport (Hanin, 2000). Thus, it is important to know and identify the factors that affect athletes during the competition in terms of psychological skills. Athletes also need to understand and be able to cope with the discomfort situation with suitable coping strategies.

Successful athletes during exercise will experience an optimal level of arousal that causes better attention in focusing on the task. Since athletes neither feel a threat nor feel tired, they have more control over themselves and their environment. Optimal level of arousal experience shows that the ability of athletes is coordinated to the difficulty of skill, in a way they are so drowned in the task that do not feel the passage of time (Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). According to theories about arousal performance relationships, the success of athletes is explained based on the optimal level of arousal, individual differences, and the athletes' interpretation of the situations. In the relationship between arousal and

performance, Fahimi and VaezMousavi (2011) showed that skilled people, during the performance have a lower level of arousal compared to novices (Fahimi & VaezMousavi, 2011).

Athletes who possess effective coping skills are often better equipped to handle the psychological demands of competition. They can manage stress, anxiety, and pressure more effectively, which can lead to improved performance outcomes. Furthermore, coping skills can help athletes maintain focus and concentration during training and competition. This heightened mental clarity can contribute to success by allowing athletes to execute their skills and strategies more effectively. Coping skills can enhance an athlete's ability to bounce back from setbacks and failures. Resilience is a key factor in long-term success, as athletes who can recover from disappointments are more likely to persist and ultimately achieve their goals. Thus, in team sports, athletes with good coping skills can contribute positively to team dynamics. They can handle interpersonal conflicts, stressors within the team, and the ups and downs of competition more effectively, which can lead to better team performance.

It's important to note that while there is evidence supporting a positive relationship between coping skills and success in sports, success is a multifaceted concept. Success can be defined in various ways, including winning competitions, achieving personal goals, or simply enjoying the sport. The impact of coping skills on success may vary depending on the specific sport, individual differences, and other contextual factors. Additionally, success in sports is influenced by a combination of physical abilities, technical skills, tactical knowledge, and mental attributes, including coping skills. Therefore, athletes and coaches often work on developing a well-rounded set of skills and attributes to optimize their chances of success.

When research establishes a significant relationship between athletic coping skills and success in sports, it has several important implications for further study and practical applications. Here are some research implications and potential directions for future research: a) Develop, implement, and evaluate interventions or training programs aimed at improving coping skills in athletes. Determine which coping strategies are most effective for different athletes and sports b) Investigate how coaching styles and athlete-coach relationships influence the development of coping skills and, consequently, success in sports c) Examine the role of coping skills in the talent development process, especially among youth athletes. Determine if early interventions can enhance future success.

Conclusion

In conclusion, athletes who possess effective coping skills are more likely to experience higher levels of satisfaction in their sports participation. These coping skills enable them to manage stress, anxiety, and adversity, leading to a more enjoyable and fulfilling athletic experience. There is evidence to support that athletes with strong coping skills tend to achieve higher levels of success in their chosen sports. Effective coping skills helps them optimize their performance, maintain focus, and bounce back from setbacks, all of which contribute to improved competitive outcomes. The development of coping skills is not only relevant to sports performance but also to an athlete's overall psychological well-being. Effective coping skills can reduce stress, anxiety, and burnout, contributing to a healthier and more balanced life both inside and outside of sports. The interplay between coping skills, satisfaction, and success in sports is a vital aspect of an athlete's journey. Recognizing and nurturing effective coping skills can lead to a more satisfying and successful athletic experience, ultimately benefiting both an athlete's performance and overall well-being. The relationship between

athletic coping skills, satisfaction, and success is a dynamic area of research with ongoing developments. Future research should explore the nuances of this relationship, including the causal pathways, mediating factors, and the impact of interventions.

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