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Motivational Climate, Self-Confidence and Perceived Success among Student Athletes

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between the perceived motivational climates of student athletes in Universiti Sains Malaysia with regard to their perceived success in their respective events. This paper also queries if the self-confidence of student athletes in Universiti Sains Malaysia acts as mediator to their perceived motivational climate and perceived success. A total of 80 completed questionnaires were returned and analysed using Smart Partial Least Squares second generation structural equation modelling software. The results indicated that self-confidence of student athlete play a mediating role in the relationship between perceived motivational climate and perceived success in organization. The findings contribute to our understanding on the importance of motivational framework on research pertaining to student athlete.

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1. Introduction

A Malaysian national sport policy was introduced in the late 1980s to provide guidance for high performance sport and mass sports developments in Malaysia (Brownfoot, 2002). This policy emphasized the importance of sport as a mechanism for Malaysian to improve health, generate economic benefit, reduce crime, increase educational attainment

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and build stronger communities. In Malaysia, the opportunity to play sports in schools, universities, sport clubs, or recreationally, is available to all. Malaysia possesses world class athletes especially in badminton, sepak takraw, squash, cycling and hockey but they face difficulties to maintain their reputable position due to lack of replacement athletes; incompetent management; and internal issues conflicts involving the sports body (Chiu, Mahat, Hua, & Radzuwan, 2013). To counter such problems, students' involvement in sports has been given serious attention in Malaysia where their involvement in sports activities is considered in getting a place in Malaysia public university. In fact, annual sports tournaments among universities are organized to support in supplying talented athletes for the country. In connection to this, every university has a pool of sports coaches to prepare the institution's team for the tournaments.

Apart from various government activities particularly from university to enhance student's sport performance, knowledge pertaining to goal orientation of student athlete is imperative. Based on achievement goal theory (Nicholls, 1984), there are two types of achievement goals disposition which reflect student athlete judging their own competence and define success or failure in sport. The first orientation is termed as task or mastery. The second orientation is termed as ego or competitiveness. The first orientation mentioned that student athletes judge success based on personal improvement and mastery of the task while the second orientation mentioned that the student athletes judge success based on comparison's subjective assessment (Gómez-López, Granero-Gallegos, Baena-Extremera, & Abalde, 2014). Study with regard to goal orientation effect of student athletes in university is imperative in order to understand the phenomena of dropout between student athletes in university sport activity. Another important concept in achievement goal theory is the motivational climate created by student athlete's family, friends and coaches (Ames, 1992; Duda & Ntoumanis, 2003). In task-involving motivational climate (mastery-oriented climate), student athletes are evaluated on the basis of their personal development, rewarded for effort and individual improvement, and placed in mixed-ability grouping, while in ego-involving motivational climate (competitive climate), student athletes are evaluated on normative standards and social comparison between individual (Ames, 1992; Newton, Duda, & Yin, 2000). Previous study revealed that task-involving motivational climate is associated with task approach goal (Cumming, Smoll, Smith, & Grossbard, 2007; Jaakkola, Ntoumanis, & Liukkonen, 2015; Newton et al., 2000; Seifriz, Duda, & Chi, 1992; Smith, Cumming, & Smoll, 2008; Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2009; Vazou, Ntoumanis, & Duda, 2006).

In essence, previous studies within the sports management context, situational motivational climate, and achievement goal have simultaneously been using the two alternative approaches. The first one, focuses on the relationship between situational motivational climates to dispositional achievement goal to motivational consequences, while, the second approach, dispositional achievement goal leads to situational motivation climate and finally, to motivational consequences. This study propose that self-confidence also plays an important factor that distinguishes motivational consequences between successful athletes from unsuccessful ones in terms of both their mental states as well as their performances (Feltz, 1988). With regard to the relationship between self-confidence and situational motivational climate, previous study revealed that perceived motivational climates has significant relationship with self-confidence (Cecchini et al., 2001; Magyar & Feltz, 2003). Similarly, it also has been found that self-confidence has significant relationship with dispositional achievement goal (Skinner, 2013; Vosloo, Ostrow, & Watson, 2009; Woodman & Hardy, 2003). With the inclusion of the self-confidence variable in the relationship between situational motivational climate, dispositional achievement and motivational consequences, this paper will contribute to achievement goal theory which now has become a popular theory in sport and exercise psychology. Practically, this paper will contribute to knowledge pertaining to goal orientation of student athletes in Malaysia. Thus, on the basis of the above, the objective was to determine the mediating effect of self-confidence on the relationship between perceived motivational climate and goal orientation (perceived success) of student athlete. It has been hypothesized that self- confidence mediates the relationship between perceived motivational climate and perceived success.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

Sport athletes are chosen as respondents for the study. They are both male and female students of Universiti Sains Malaysia and they represent the university in soccer, hockey, netball, badminton, swimming, basketball, track events and volleyball. The unit of analysis for the study is individual.

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